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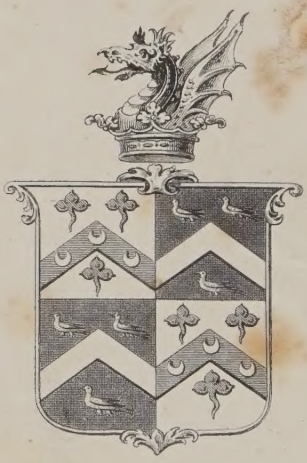

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SHETLAND

AND THE SHETLANDERS;

OR,

The Northern Circuit.

WITH A MAP OF THE ROUTE.

By CATHERINE SINCLAIR,

AUTHOR OF "MODERN ACCOMPLISHMENTS," "MODERN SOCIETY," "HILL AND VALLEY," "CHARLIE SEYMOUR," "HOLIDAY HOUSE," &c. &c.

V116

O Scotland! nurse of bravest men,
But nurse of bad men too.
For thee the good attempt in vain,
What villains still undo!

ROBERTSON OF STRUAN.

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PREFACE.

THE author in a previous volume ventured forward with some apprehension, but she has been so agreeably surprised by the success of her first shot, in bringing down a large covey of readers, that she feels encouraged now to discharge a second barrel, trusting it may not be said that she has overshot the mark.

The more deeply grateful the author feels to those who have candidly, and only too partially viewed her present endeavour to throw some additional light and interest

on the localities of Scotland, the more solicitous she is, not to draw too largely on their forbearance, or to intrude too frequently on their attention; she now therefore concludes this work, hoping that the very indulgent public may long continue

"To all its faults a little blind."

SHETLAND

AND THE SHETLANDERS.

DORNOCH.

TO A SCOTCH COUSIN.

I've often wish'd that I had clear,
For life six hundred pounds a-year,
A handsome house to lodge a friend,
A river at my garden's end,
A terrace-walk, and half a rood
Of land, set out to plant a wood.

POPE.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—When students are about to leave Oxford, a list is given in of the books to which their attention has been chiefly devoted, and they are examined by a learned jury on the progress and depth of their attainments. If we were all obliged occasionally to render

up before competent examiners such an account of our time, it would be amusing, in most cases, to see the miscellaneous list of favourite authors presented! Instead of Homer, Cicero, and Herodotus, how often we should find "Trollope, Dickens, and Hook," or perhaps "Byron, Scott, and the Newgate Calendar," but of late your more abstruse studies have been seriously impeded by the incessant battledore and shuttlecock of our correspondence, and the Post-office must wonder what can be going on in the North, seeing so constant a succession of letters pouring in upon you, their seals strained almost to bursting, like the lock of a trunk on a journey.

We are credibly informed, that the Empress Josephine wore thirty new bonnets in a month; and really those who travel through the wind and rain of this changeable summer would require to follow the example, or to wear theirs of cast-iron. Mr. M'Intosh ought to receive a petition from the ladies, to invent something becoming for us to wear during rain, as he certainly has sacrificed the ornamental to the useful in respect to gentlemen, who are much to

be pitied for the sort of hideous domino they all wear in a shower, though they might be envied also for the impunity with which they can brave the worst now. I often think A—— would rather have a torrent of rain than otherwise, to prove how impregnable, amidst the war of elements, are his fortifications.

We had a delightful clearing-up towards evening for inspecting the neat little county town of Dornoch, where I greatly admired the magnificent donation of a fine cathedral presented to the city some years ago, by the Duchess-Countess of Sutherland, who expended L.6000 in renewing an ancient ecclesiastical edifice which stood here, dedicated to St. Gilbert, a saint with whom I was not previously acquainted. The former building had been burned, along with a large proportion of the town, by an invading army, but her Grace caused the old proportions and very elaborate decorations to be copied with almost Chinese minuteness, and now it wants only a few centuries of antiquity to be quite venerable.

After this renewal had been successfully completed, the Duchess only once enjoyed the gra-

tification of attending public worship in that house of God, where she now lies interred beneath a wooden trap-door in front of the altar. There also sleeps the Duke her husband, to whom the county of Sutherland owed, and has testified, almost unbounded respect and gratitude. On the summit of a neighbouring hill, a pillar, sixty feet high, surmounted by a colossal statue, may be seen for thirty miles round, "known to ev'ry star and ev'ry wind that blows." It was raised by the personal labour and subscriptions of his own attached tenantry to the memory of this nobleman, originally a stranger to our heath-covered mountains, who became so completely a Scotchman by adoption, that he spent the whole income of his Highland estates in improving them, resided much in that remote district, associated cordially with his tenantry, and chose his Dukedom to perpetuate his connection with this country and with the ancient Earldom of Sutherland, the oldest title in Britain.

The Duke's death was supposed to have been hastened by the cold and fatigue of a steam-voyage to Scotland; and the Duchess, who survived him five years, gave directions, on her

death-bed, with singular forethought, that her body should be conveyed to Dornoch by sea, but that any of her family who were to be present at the funeral should avoid the danger of a winter voyage, and follow by land.

Few persons have enjoyed a more remarkably prosperous life than the Duchess-Countess of Sutherland, gifted from her earliest youth with an eminent share of beauty, talents, and fortune, which she lived to enjoy, almost unimpaired, during a long course of years.

It is well known, that when Lord Trentham was jilted by the beautiful but fickle Lady Caroline Spenser, some friend reported to him that the young heiress of Dunrobin had expressed astonishment how any lady could refuse one so deserving of happiness. Upon hearing this, he instantly declared that she could more than compensate for his recent disappointment,—the result of which eclaircissement was, an alliance most propitious to the best interests of Scotland.

The Duchess-Countess, when about to be snatched from all that this world could bestow, testified astonishing composure while she con-

templated the immediate approach of death. When alluding to the prospect of her own impending dissolution, she said, "It is quite as well now as afterwards;" and when advised to postpone some important business, she replied, "There is no time for me *but* the present."

No subject excites such deep interest in every human breast, as to ascertain how that last enemy has been met by others, which must sooner or later conquer ourselves! It often seems to me, that, during life, we are placed between two impenetrable curtains, the one hiding from our sight all that is past, the other all that is future; but a death-bed throws both, as it were, aside,—the door stands a-jar leading into another world,—and we then see at once, in solemn array, all the follies of our former existence, and all the terrors of a future judgment, which often so fearfully awaken those agonies of conscience that beset the mind of a dying sinner. Sir Henry Halford, who attended the final hours of many an eminent individual, has recorded his own surprise how many have no reluctance to die,—some from impatience of suffering, others from passive indifference, but

many from faith in our holy religion. "Such men," he adds, "were not only calm and supported, but cheerful, in the hour of death, and I never quitted such a sick-chamber, without a hope that my last end might be like theirs." It is very remarkable to observe, how little our love of life is proportioned to the external prosperity we enjoy in it, and that whenever we fancy any individual having more than a common share of happiness, he is always some one of whom we know nothing, or very little. You have heard of the poor bed-ridden old beggar, who clasped his hands in an agony of grief when told he was dying, and exclaimed, "Oh, this is a pleasant world!" and you have seen others, with scarcely a want unsupplied, who seemed weary of their very existence, and endured it only from a dread of futurity. Baxter said, he was all his life tempted sinfully to wish that he had never been born; and those who have attained the most that this world can offer, have greatest leisure to look around on the barrenness of the prospect, while they might be apt to exclaim, like Cæsar, when he gained his empire, "Is this all!" A peaceful con-

science, that blessing which all might enjoy, who rightly seek and value it, is the only support which will avail in the end, and some Christians have attained that holy faith which encouraged them to feel a calm serene expectation, that when the veil was drawn back which hides eternity from our sight, they were immediately to behold the glories of Heaven. Yet how carefully must we discriminate between a resigned death, and a prepared death. Those who are most eagerly seeking the world's honours, pleasures, and applause, would scarcely be ready to acknowledge the wisdom of that last wish expressed by the unfortunate Princess Caroline Matilda, who scratched these words with a diamond on the window of her prison—"Oh! make me innocent —be others great!" Every living person is born with desires which the world, and all it contains, never can satisfy; and though all the gifts of fortune accumulated around us, were conspiring to hide our Maker from our thoughts, we could not but feel that there are higher pleasures, and greater gifts, than any upon earth, which we are created to seek, and with-

out which we can reach no happiness that deserves the name. It is astonishing how many persons never pause, in the hurry of life, to ask themselves in what their enjoyments consist, and to what they tend,—who live in mere vague sensations of either pleasure or pain, without ascertaining whether they acquire all the best and richest blessings which might be procured. If we are merely receiving change for a note, what a cautious examination is made whether the full amount be paid, and how carefully do we avoid being cheated of the smallest fraction, yet how indifferent we are whether the joys and hopes on which we spend our lives be genuine, and whether they be such as will certainly pass current in that future world to which we all are hastening.

As riches and honours, then, neither increase the love of life, nor diminish the awfulness of death, we can scarcely form too low an estimate of their intrinsic worth. When rightly used, however, not as the end, but as the means of enjoyment, they add so much to the usefulness and the influence of those who desire to promote the glory of God, and the good of man-

kind, that they surely become legitimate objects of pursuit, though we read that Martin Luther, in his last will and testament, returned special thanks to God that he had been born poor, and possessed "neither house, land, nor money to leave behind."

The Cathedral of Dornoch has been built, unfortunately, with so loud an echo inside, that part of the congregation hear the sound only, but not the sense, of what may be said; and frequently, in fine weather, Mr. Kennedy prefers preaching in the open air. Even when talking to each other, we seemed to hear double, but much might be amended by hanging up curtains and draperies to deaden the reverberation. Nothing is so little understood in architecture as the building of sacred edifices to suit the voice; but it would be a useful invention if churches could be built so that only good sermons should be audible.

The Duke and Duchess of Sutherland established, round the whole of their vast domains, a line of first-rate inns, each displaying for its frontispiece their own crest, the cat rampant, certainly, next to Whittington's, the most fortu-

nate cat in the world. It was alleged formerly to be a curious peculiarity of this county, recorded by Sir Robert Gordon, that "ther is not a ratt in Sutherland; and if they doe come thither in shipps from other pairts, which often happeneth, they die presentlie, how soon they doe smell the aire of that cuntrey; but there is great store and abundance of them in Catheynes, the verie nixt adjacent province." Some of that very peculiar "aire" should be imported to London for the House of Commons. One of the best hotels in Scotland may be found at this charming village of Golspie, situated close to a fine trouting stream, and near the noble park of Dunrobin, which is liberally opened for a public promenade. Mrs. Duncan, the landlady here, is sister to two clergymen, and a most pious, excellent person herself, moderate in her charges, and so cordial in her reception of guests, that it seems like visiting some kind old aunt or grandmother to arrive at the door. She hurried up to us immediately with a most liberal presentation of wine and shortbread, that we might be "eating while we ordered dinner!" Our hostess spoke with tears of the

late Duchess, who often stopped her carriage when passing the inn, to ascertain what travellers had lately been there; and the good landlady is gifted with the faculty most useful in her line, in which none but the Royal Family could excel her, of never forgetting any person. Mrs. Duncan had been completely perplexed by one guest, however, last time I was here, who arrived at Golspie in the mail, intending to pass on, but attracted by the splendid scenery and excellent fare, he ordered his baggage to be dismounted, and declared his intention to remain there all night. Day after day passed on, week after week elapsed, and still the gentleman occupied her best parlour, and lingered on, entranced by new beauties in the landscape, till the summer had passed entirely away. No name appeared on his portmanteau, and he neither received letters, nor cultivated acquaintances! The whole inn got into an uproar of curiosity about this interesting incognito! According to all the rules of romance, he ought to have been handsome, but conceive my disappointment at seeing a middle-aged, respectable looking man, in a brown bob-wig! Even Mrs. Duncan

seemed quite mortified, that he was neither a disguised Prince, nor a swindler, all the silver spoons remained in their places, and at last he paid his bill in quite a matter-of-fact way, put his trunk on the mail again, and exit on the top of the coach!

Mrs. Duncan's reminiscences of former guests are more disinterested than those of your old landlady at Brighton, who estimated travellers by the length of bill they incurred, saying, "He was an excellent man,—always posted with four horses, ordered his bottle of sherry for dinner, and seldom went to bed without a hot supper at night!"

I never felt a sensation so like being in a balloon as when gazing from the drawing-room window of Dunrobin Castle, perched like an eagle's aërie on the summit of a lofty rock, and looking down on the waving tops of the trees, the ocean furrowed with streaks of foam, and the far distant prospect of Tarbetness, with its beacon-light

"Streaming comfort o'er the troubl'd deep."

A long line of points and pinnacles terminates at

Trouphead, and if you can look on the whole view without an ecstacy of admiration, shut your eyes on nature for ever after, as you are unworthy to behold her. The park, though not highly dressed or ornamented, has the beauty of great extent, and is abundantly wooded to the edge of the wide and intensely blue ocean. Every tree so exposed to the wild northern blast must have a precarious existence, and those planted nearest the ocean generally perish on a forlorn hope; but no species can brave the sea-breeze half so hardily as the Huntingdon willow, which has outgrown all its cotemporaries at least twelve feet in height, and is covered with abundant foliage, though all shaped like flags, with a bare pole next the sea, and the long branches fluttering and streaming towards the land.

The enormously fat housekeeper, well-known at Dunrobin, was absent to-day, but we found a thinner one, who answered our purpose equally well in displaying the house, which is considered to be the oldest inhabited residence in Britain. Do you remember the conundrum with which a friend of ours once astonished the stately and dignified Duchess-Countess of Sutherland,

"Why is the proprietor of this place, like a thief on the gallows? Because he has *Done-robbing!*" The date is 1100, and the name is of Gaelic derivation, signifying "the hill of Robert," after Robert Earl of Sutherland, who built it. In the court of this castle is one of the deepest draw wells in Scotland, but we must hope that truth does not lie at the bottom of it.

This remote old castle used to be filled, not many years ago, with company as distinguished for rank and consequence as the guests at Windsor Palace. The first society in England was attracted by the Duchess, who lived there like a feudal Princess, entertaining often thirty guests at dinner, and lodging sixty servants in the house. Since her lamented decease, a pall of mourning is spread over the whole county, and this venerable castle seemed to me now like an old friend in adversity, as I wandered through its desolate halls, remembering the last time I dined here, when "the free and independent electors of Sutherlandshire" were entertained at table, and her Grace's two pipers effectually drowned all political discussions, by performing pibrochs alternately, equipped, the one in the Sutherland

tartan, the other in that of Lord Reay's country, which her Grace had recently added to her vast possessions. Even many of the old ancestors are vanished from Dunrobin, having gone to London to be refreshed and beautified, though copies of several still decorate the steward's room; and I could not but fancy, in looking at the Duchess-Countess' mother, and her aunt, the good Lady Glenorchy, that, hanging where they do, they must lend their countenance occasionally to scenes and conversations rather unsuitable to their dignity. My grandmother, Lady Janet Sutherland's portrait appears there in the character of a little smiling old-fashioned infant, certainly rather formal, with a cherry in her hand, looking very unlike the venerable character she afterwards became, when, such was the reverence felt for her in Caithness, that a clergyman hearing she was to preside at an Edinburgh assembly, directed his letter to her as "Moderator of the General Assembly, Edinburgh!" Her nephew, the last Earl of Sutherland's likeness, in full Highland garb, is to be seen on the staircase. Judging from that, and the other portraits of him in various splendid costumes, which de-

corate different apartments, he must have had a very interesting appearance, and his Countess has so animated and speaking an expression, that her mere picture enlivens the room, and she must have been a delightful companion. She and her husband having both died young, within sixteen days of each other, were buried in one grave at Holyrood Chapel, and the Duchess-Countess raised a monument to the memory of her parents in Dornoch Cathedral. It consists of two marble pillars, each surmounted by an urn, and crowned with a coronet. This inscription is carved underneath—"They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided."

A dismal likeness is here, representing the Duke of Richmond, who never laid aside his mourning after the execution of Charles I.; and we admired an interesting picture of Lady Glenorchy in her childhood, teaching music to an orphan girl whom she educated; an early indication of that active benevolent usefulness, for which, in more essential things, she became afterwards so distinguished.

The Marquis of Hastings, and a gay party of visitors at Dunrobin, once secured the whole mail at Golspie, and wheeled themselves round to Thurso, where they hired post horses to John O' Groat's house, taking refreshments along with them—a ruin is, of course, nothing without a sandwich—and were back next night, making a circuit of 120 miles. Most travellers must be grievously disappointed in the far-famed John O'Groat's house, of which not a fragment remains. The downs in that place, however, are the most vividly and intensely green you ever saw, and the clear white waves break along a beach composed, for many miles' extent, of shells ground to powder;

——— all beside is pebbly length of shore,
And far as eye can reach, it can discern no more.

During our progress along forty miles from Dunrobin to Wick, we drove so close to the sea, that but for the height of the hills, we might have kept one wheel in the water all the way, and the journey was like a voyage, without the discomfort or danger. The distant sea

gulls looked like a flight of butterflies, and the glittering foam was blown in feathers along the ocean, " a moment white, then gone for ever!" Many parts of this coast are bold and fine, though the bleak and barren prevails elsewhere, and several of the fields are so covered with large rocks, some flat and others upright, that the appearance was like that of a church-yard. One proprietor, to consume the superfluous stones, has built little towers, resembling chess-men, at the corners of several fields; but if the whole had been gathered up, they would make a perfect pyramid of Egypt.

The flourishing little sea-port of Helmsdale, which now sends out a fleet of several hundred herring boats, is inhabited by *ci-devant* cottagers from the rural parts of Sutherlandshire, where forty miles of country, once their home, looks now as if a victorious enemy had laid it waste; every little hamlet in ruins, though the scorched and blackened walls yet remain, the church where once a numerous congregation assembled, now so nearly empty, that the parish clergyman might address his clerk as Dean Swift did " dearly beloved Roger!" and the untenanted

gardens, still partly enclosed, and more brightly green than the surrounding common,

> ——— where once the garden smiled,
> And still where many a garden flower grows wild.

The villagers long resented this arbitrary substitution of sheep, while they were themselves driven in flocks to the coast, and when any of the Sutherland family appeared in that neighbourhood for some time afterwards, they were followed by crowds angrily imitating the bleating of sheep; but if the end could sanctify the means, that measure has turned out well, as the people, formerly steeped in poverty, and sunk in the desponding indolence consequent on hopeless penury, are now become industrious, cheerful, and prosperous. We saw the Castle of Helmsdale, looking like the ruins of an old band-box. Once upon a time, however, it had inhabitants, when an atrocious murder was committed there by Isabella Sinclair, who poisoned the Earl and Countess of Sutherland, and was condemned to death for the crime in Edinburgh, but made away with herself on the day of her execution, cursing her cousin, George Earl of Caithness, whom

she accused of having instigated the crime, that her own son might succeed to the title, a promising youth, who, unfortunately for himself, brought a strange retribution on his ambitious mother, as he drank the poisoned cup she had prepared for Lord Sutherland's only son, and immediately expired.

The Ord of Caithness was formerly pre-eminent for being the most dangerous bit of road in Scotland. Mr. Telford tamed it down, however, into such perfect safety and insignificance, that modern travellers can scarcely credit the difficulty and hazard with which ten years ago it was crossed, unless they are shown the old track, an almost perpendicular line of loose stones at the edge of an airy precipice. On first beholding this mountainous road since its metamorphosis, I felt somewhat like the fairy whose tent was turned into a thimble! During the last century, whenever the late Earl of Caithness, my grandmother Lady Janet Sinclair, or any of the chief landed proprietors, entered that county, a troop of their tenants assembled on the border of Sutherland, and drew the carriage themselves over the hill, a distance of two miles, that

nothing might be trusted in such a scene to the discretion of quadrupeds. A pretty considerably narrow, perpendicular road skirted along the very edge of a precipice rising twelve hundred feet abruptly out of the ocean, without the smallest hint of a parapet, and many travellers, seeing this formidable obstacle, turned their horses' heads without proceeding to scale it. The accident-maker for the Dumfries Courier should settle for life here, as there is quite a treasury of untold stories to be heard in every house,—how the mail was upset in one place, and at another how Lord Duffus had only time to spring out and save his life before his gig and horse went over, and never spoke more. It appears to me, that gigs all come to an untimely end. I never yet saw a newspaper, without one or two having run off, and if ever they are within reach of a precipice, they make a point of going over. The mail-coach now rattles down the whole descent of the Ord, scarcely deigning even to use a drag!

It is an old established superstition, that none of our clan may cross the Ord on a Monday, because on that day of the week, forty

Sinclairs, commanded by the Earl of Caithness, ventured over to the battle of Flodden Field, and not one survived except the drummer, who was dismissed before the battle began. The whole troop had dressed in green, and since then it is likewise considered fool-hardy in any one bearing the name of Sinclair to wear green. I question whether we are entitled even to eat green peas, or to drink green tea, and whenever a Sinclair loses his purse, it must of course have been of the objectionable colour.

When my late father succeeded to his estate, there was not a road, nor a single cart in Caithness, and he introduced the first highway when only eighteen years of age. Having been taunted with the impossibility of carrying one over the hill of Bencheilt, he went to the place in person, assembled 1260 labourers, assigned each a separate spot, where tools and provisions had already been placed, and in one single day, what had only been a rough horse-track in the morning, became fit for carriages before night. Soon after, he suggested the plan to Lord Melville, of obtaining L.50,000 as a grant by Parliament, from the Scotch forfeited estates, to make roads

and bridges throughout the ultra-northern counties, where the drivers of cattle had to swim with their droves across the rivers when taking them to market; and from the same fund he obtained L.8500 for making a harbour at Wick.

A sixth part of Caithness belonged to my father when he came of age, and he represented the county during more than thirty years. No lover ever felt more anxious to decorate his mistress, than he did to adorn the barren wilds of his native district. He even persuaded himself it was beautiful! As one proof of his zeal, the romantic entrance to Caithness is richly wooded, for he planted the hills of Berridale to their very summits, and sold them afterwards for little more than it cost to embellish them. Two salmon streams unite here, and flow round the base of these mountains, while the road winds circuitously down to the very bottom of a deep glen, where a charmingly situated inn, built when the trees were planted, lies embosomed in wood. Almost overhanging this resting-place, but nearly two hundred feet higher up the hill, stands Langwell, now the residence of

Mr. Donald Horne. When the late proprietor, after taking possession of his recently purchased estate, first appeared at church, the parish clergyman, being gratefully attached to my father, looked full in the face of his new auditor, and gave out for his text the fifth verse of the seventy-fifth psalm, "Lift not up your Horn on high." The clergy in primitive times used to delight in selecting eccentric texts. One of Bishop Bull's most interesting sermons is on that verse of St. Paul's, "The cloak which I left at Troas, bring with thee, and also the books, but especially the parchments." A very admirable one was preached once against lukewarmness, on the text, "Ephraim is a cake unturned;" and a clergyman not long since announced for his subject, "What will this babbler say?"

Some miles north of Berridale, stands the bluff old Castle of Dunbeath, which in old times was garrisoned by the Marquis of Montrose shortly before his death. It juts out into the ocean, with the sea blast whistling through its walls, and the bold dashing waves roaring and sparkling at its foot. A spurious attempt at

trees in front, scorched with cold till they are perfectly threadbare, actually made me laugh. Two rows had started in a straight line from the road to the house, but about half way they suddenly came to an untimely end. The tall, bare, skeleton trunks, and the perpendicular branches, were huddled all together, with a thin canopy of foliage near the top, as if they were carrying a tray of leaves on their heads. The effect was more comical than you can fancy.

The next place we passed was Nottingham House, a large bleak lonely mansion, belonging to the male representative of the Sutherland family, who would have inherited that ancient earldom, for which his predecessors had a law-suit, endeavouring to prove that the Earls of Sutherland for three centuries had all been usurpers, but like most old Scotch titles, this was impartially settled in the female line. Nottingham House used formerly to be in sad disrepair, and the late proprietor was overheard once, when a visitor unexpectedly arrived, calling loudly to his servant, "Bring me a fork to open the drawing-room door!" Many of the windows were at that time built up, and a

clergyman who slept there one night previous to preaching in the parish church, got up next morning and opened his shutters, but seeing no light, he retired to bed, wondering much what had disturbed him so early. Unable to sleep, he watched impatiently for the first glimpse of dawn, thinking that certainly a sleepless night was a very tedious affair, when at length the clerk rushed into his room, saying that the whole congregation were assembled in their pews, and had waited impatiently for some time!

Wick is a sea-port, so fragrant with fish, that when we entered I thought of your brother's voyage in a herring smack, when the seats were barrels of herrings, and the staircase from the cabin formed by piles of casks. One year, many fields in Caithness were manured with herrings; but none of the proprietors find the perfume so oppressive as strangers do, because these fisheries are the chief sources of their wealth, only reaped within the last half century, when my father advanced money himself, that the inhabitants might try their first experiment of fish-

ing on these coasts, and now 14,000 Caithness fishermen are in constant employment gathering in their annual harvest of herrings. My very letter will smell of fish, if I say another syllable about it, but the flavour cannot be very injurious to health, as I have this evening drunk tea with an interesting old lady who has lived here ninety-nine years. During that period she has been a warm-hearted friend to three generations of our family in succession, so you may suppose it was with no ordinary feelings that I went to the house. Her first reception of me was in the true Highland fashion, saying, with an expression of touching retrospection, "Your father's daughter is welcome;" and after ascertaining that all our family were well, she added in a tone of earnest feeling, "They cannot be better than I wish them." There was something almost Ossianic in the tone of her language; and it is pleasing to see not only the faculties, but also the affections, perfectly fresh and perfectly wide awake at so advanced a period of life. It had all the solemnity of a voice from the dead, when she spoke of former days, and

of friends long departed, whose very existence seemed to me a tale of other times.

When the Romans cursed an enemy, it was in these words, "May you survive all your friends and relations." How often I have thought it would be the saddest feeling of extreme old age, to see "friend after friend depart,"—the lights one by one extinguished which enlivened our early days, and to think that those connections on whose kindness we are finally cast will seem cheerless and remote, if none remain who can remember that we were ever young, happy, and beloved, and who have known nothing of us but the dark evening of a life so full of sorrows and infirmities, that it would scarcely seem a duty to weep over its close! The three messengers of death are accident, sickness, and old age, all unwelcome when they come, but the last is that which requires most sympathy, and too often excites the least, for the reverence paid in ancient times to venerable years is not now universal, having given place in a lamentable degree to indifference, and even to ridicule, though in many instances, a satirical feeling is

excited, not without justice, against those who will not grow old with a good grace, and who never ask themselves, in the language of Scripture, "How old art thou?" When I see aged persons vainly struggling to keep up the semblance of youth, that text sometimes occurs to my recollection, "Grey hairs are here and there upon him, and he knoweth it not." The celebrated wit, Lord Norbury, determined to have his laugh to the last, laid a bet of L.100 with his cotemporary, the late Marquis of Drogheda, which would survive. Both were taken ill at once, and Lord Norbury, who lingered longest, gained the money, but remarked, that he thought it would have turned out "a dead heat." The average of human existence is said to be nearly double in Britain what it is in Naples! Old Mrs. Butler, whom you remember in Edinburgh walking often more than a mile to see me, was ascertained to be one hundred and ten when she died, but life at such an extreme age is like a flower without root, the first blast lays it low; and in taking leave of our aged and respected friend at Wick, I felt a solemnizing conscious-

ness that both shall pass into another, and I trust a better world, before we meet again.

There everlasting spring abides,
And never withering flow'rs;
Death like a narrow sea divides
This heav'nly land from ours.

WICK.

I like the weather when it's not too cold,
That is, I like three months in all the year.
BYRON.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—We may say here, like Lord Dudley, that the summer has set in with its usual severity! July and August have forgotten themselves completely, and turned a cold shoulder to all their old friends and admirers. In this country the leaves have at all times a short reign, but this year they were frightened to death by a frost, soon after they appeared, looking scorched and lifeless now, especially the fir tribe, which put up with cold blasts worse than many that seem less hardy.

If travellers would only condescend to forget

that there are such things as trees in the world, they could not but admire the bold coast scenery of Caithness, and we walked three miles from Wick this morning in search of two very strange and tottering old sea-beaten ruins, which have bid defiance to the waves for many centuries. The Castles of Sinclair and Girnigo are but little known, though well worth making acquaintance with, being so remote and so retired from public life, that few tourists are aware of their merit. These time-worn remnants stand side by side, and the oldest wears well, while the other is a mere wreck, yet the entire mass is magnificent, towering out of the broad ocean in a noble and commanding style. The situation is very dignified and impressive. A natural wall of perpendicular rock, about sixty feet high, runs out like a long pier into the ocean, surrounded on three sides by a boiling foam of waves, struggling forward, and lashing themselves in ceaseless fury at its base. On the utmost verge of this point, and scarcely to be distinguished from the natural masonry of rock, stands the massy wall of Castle Girnigo, still about five stories high, and looking almost ha-

bitable, the windows, doors, and loop-holes, being faced with red free-stone, conspicuously seen amidst the surrounding mass of sea-green walls. A curious subterranean staircase descends far beneath the level of the tide, and a narrow concealed passage under ground leads to a creek where the waves beat in with angry vehemence, and where a boat was formerly hid, in which the family of Lord Caithness escaped when the fortress was besieged and about to be taken.

A tall tottering fragment of Castle Sinclair rears its venerable head on high, looking nearly as unsafe as the pillars of brick built by children, which cannot be balanced above five minutes, and yet not a stone has fallen within the memory of the oldest man in the parish. There is an "oldest man" in all parishes, who remembers every thing, and vouches for all remarkable facts.

The family motto of Lord Caithness is, "Commit thy work to God." It seems rather inappropriate to an earl of ancient times, known as "George the wicked," who became chancellor of Scotland, and lived a great part of his long and atrocious life within the walls of Girnigo Castle, where we saw the room in which his second son,

William Sinclair, was slain by his own eldest brother John, who bruised him to death with his fetters during his imprisonment there, and where the earl cruelly starved to death his eldest son. He himself died at Edinburgh, and his body lies interred at Roslin Chapel; but he desired that his heart—such as it was—should be buried in a handsome cemetery, raised in honour of his murdered son, and which still remains, forming an ornament to the city of Wick, where so much hospitality now prevails, that we saw little danger of any one being starved in the present day. Caithness piques itself on giving the best breakfasts in Scotland, and I wish you could have accompanied us to the manse this morning, where every guest would require half-a-dozen appetites to achieve what his knife and fork are expected to do. The lady who said her appetite required to be amused, should have taken her place here, surrounded by all the dishes peculiar to a Highland *déjeuné*. You would be much surprised at seeing the Caithness geese, which are smoked and salted like Westphalia hams, and are said to sharpen the appetite amazingly, though a

gentleman once complained that he did not find it so, having picked the bones of one, without feeling a whit more hungry!

In the parish of Wick may be seen the truth of Dr. Chalmers's remark, that "a house-going minister makes a church-going people." Nothing can exceed the reverence which every Christian here delights in testifying towards the zealous, able, and long-tried servant of God who officiates among them. It is anxiously hoped, that one so fitted to guide others, may long be spared himself; but having been lately in precarious health, Mr. Phin fainted twice last Sunday in the pulpit. The use of restoratives revived him the first time, and he resumed the service, but a few minutes afterwards, he had a more prolonged attack, which obliged him to desist, and the congregation dispersed, many of them in tears. Next morning the manse gate was besieged by parishioners, eagerly inquiring how he had passed the night, and several old women forced their way into the house, with various infallible nostrums to cure his disorder, but unanimous in only one point, which was, in earnestly admonishing him to "take nothing

the doctor ordered!" Here the common people have a superstitious horror of the faculty, being perfectly convinced, that, like rat-catchers, they bring the evil they profess to cure; and three years ago, an Edinburgh apothecary narrowly escaped with his life, being suspected of importing the cholera to Wick in his pill-box.

From the manse windows, Mr. Phin pointed out to me a newly erected "Popish chapel," which he looked at as if it were a mine dug under the town, and ready to explode. If the rapid extension of Roman Catholic influence were regarded with the same salutary horror in quarters where it may yet prove more dangerous, we might indeed rejoice, for it is an alarming circumstance to a Protestant nation, if anything can thoroughly alarm us, that such edifices are arising in every part of Scotland, though fortunately they are as yet only like traps set to catch a congregation,—the casket without

Since writing the above, this exemplary minister of Christ has been called into the presence of that almighty Being, in a better world, whom he so faithfully served upon earth. His last hours were full of hope, peace, and Christian resignation; and amidst the heartfelt grief of his numerous congregation, it may still be said, "He being dead, yet speaketh."

the jewels,—not being yet, in most instances, supplied with audiences. This very small chapellette at Wick is only attended by a few soldiers' wives from Ireland, and the funds for raising it were in no degree contributed by Caithness. It has been conjectured that the Papists wished to boast of their dominion reaching to every extremity of Britain; but I hope we shall never come quite to Archbishop Magee's antithesis about the Irish, when he offended all parties by saying, that they have "a church without a religion, and a religion without a church!" At the ancient house of Kilravock, which I have already described, there is now to be seen a bull, signed by the Pope's own hand, granting plenary remission of all their sins, to Colonel Rose's family, and to every branch of his house, from the date of this document, to a period of which there are still about forty years to run; but I am happy to understand that none of this family have yet taken any very extraordinary advantage of their uncommon privileges.

Two ladies of rank in different parts of Scotland, within the last three years, have each

built a chapel, entirely at her own expense, as large as the parish church. One of them, raised by the present Duchess of Leeds, I saw, the architecture of which, like that of all Popish buildings, is beautiful. It should be the ambition of Protestants, to out-church, out-pray, and out-preach those zealous sectarians, for we are too apt to regard Roman Catholic supremacy, and Roman Catholic persecutions as a tale of other times, totally extinct now, like the superstitions of ghosts and witchcraft, which I trust may be the case; but one would wish on such a subject, as Shakespeare says, "to make assurance doubly sure," leaving those who advocate the worse cause,

> To prove their doctrine orthodox,
> By apostolic blows and knocks.

If we had a horticultural show in Caithness, every prize ought to be gained by the gardener at Stirkoke, where an unusual variety of flowers has been enlisted into the service, and the proprietor, Mr. Horne, wages a perpetual and successful war against the northern blasts. Rhododendrons are there in splendid flower, dwarf rhododendrons in a blaze of blossoms, and pan-

sies equal to any I have seen elsewhere. The Russian cranberry is expected some time or other to produce fruit; the camellias are doing their very best to live; the fir-trees are not yet perfectly dead; sixty acres of hard wood in every variety are very thriving; the forest trees have grown so tall, that A—— could not touch the top of them with his umbrella; and a most beautiful green-house is glowing with geraniums, fuschias, passion-flowers, musk-plants, and balsams, besides which, in the open air, we observed several exotics from the south, such as wall-flowers, honeysuckles, jessamine, &c. &c. In short, it is astonishing how much embellishment may be effected by perseverance and enterprise, for the general aspect of Stirkoke is quite verdant, the house not much overtopping the trees, and the leaves almost as green in July, as we generally see them in October. In some places nearer the sea it was very different, for the unhappy looking forests resembled an old broom turned up, and a stranger remarked, there was not a tree in Caithness on which any one who was tired of life, could hang himself.

In the plantations at Stirkoke, we started a

fine covey of young pheasants, probably the most northern colony of these birds in the world. A noble looking red deer also was tethered in the park, looking so quiet and domestic, that it seemed curious to think what days of toil and sleepless nights a sportsman would gladly have endured, to see the mere tips of his horns, but there he stood safe from every gun, though ready to be shot at the shortest notice. A French cook in the Highlands some years ago, sent up the most magnificent dinner, made entirely of red-deer venison, and no one could have found out how nearly all the various dishes were connected, but the second course must have been rather defective, consisting only of hartshorn jelly. The flavour is rather powerful, but a Frenchman can disguise anything, or cook a white leather glove into a palatable morsel, never being reduced to quite such straits as the Scotch housekeeper you told me of, who, trusting to the impunity with which her ungainly side-dishes usually escaped untasted from the dining-room, and finding herself at a loss to fill up one corner of the table, sent up a finely formed shape of porridge under a white sauce.

Nothing makes cheerfulness flow in upon the spirits more certainly than travelling,—the constantly varying panorama of new ideas and new subjects of interest, besides a fair opportunity for grumbling whenever you feel in the humour, which, I am convinced, is a great luxury to some travellers, from the frequent use they make of it. We all wish to be either envied or pitied; and at present I could make out a very good case either way, according to the representation of our pleasures or difficulties on the road; but I am always for viewing the bright side of every thing, and never would wish to look at the sun as philosophers do, merely to discover the spots.

Having now sent you three sheets of the best superfine Bath post, it is time to economize my stationery, and to wish you a safe journey through what I have already written; therefore, with best wishes, adieu; and, as the poet, whoever he was, very sensibly remarks,

"An adieu should in utterance die,
When written should faintly appear,
Only heard in the sob of a sigh,
Or seen in the blot of a tear.

CAITHNESS.

To gain his purpose, he performed the part
Of a good actor, and prepared to start.

My dear Cousin,—Letter-writing brings forth the dormant ideas that would otherwise slumber in our minds, and arranges them before us, like nine-pins out of a box. Mine tumble out so miscellaneously, that they will not be very easily drilled into order; but I hope you may be sufficiently interested to grope your way on with me. As Bishop Hall says, "curiosity is the appetite of the mind," so we shall suppose you are perfectly dying of it now, and require as much mental food as our travels can possibly supply.

One of the best farmers in this county, my brother's tenant, Mr. Gunn, is the fifteenth in regular descent, from father to son, who has occupied the same land! He has six sons, all skilful agriculturists, several of whom have already made themselves comfortably independent, and his mode of instructing them in business is uncommon, as well as extremely judicious. The beautiful and romantic little farm of Dalmore, which he rents from Sir George, has been sub-let to each of his sons in succession as they grew up, and there they serve an apprenticeship in the management of this small concern, for which their father exacts the full value. He annually purchases their stock, and drives as close a bargain with his sons as if they were strangers, until each is thoroughly versed in all the mysteries of the field and of the market-place. Two of these young men made six thousand pounds last year in Sutherlandshire, by the sale of sheep and wool; so farmers need scarcely emigrate to Australia to make fortunes in that line: and affluence may still be realized at home, by those who have prudence and industry. It was the saying, long ago, of a per-

son who knew the world better than either you or I, that "many succeed by talent, many by a miracle, but most people by beginning without a shilling!"

Since we arrived in Caithness, the eldest of these promising young men has been suddenly cut off, at the early age of twenty-five, by the small-pox, which occasions a deep sensation of sympathy and sorrow throughout the whole county; and many of the chief proprietors assembled at his funeral, as well as an immense concourse of people, to testify their respect and regret. Fifty years since the proprietors in this county scarcely improved an acre a-year, but now several East Lothian farmers have found it worth while to take land in this neighbourhood for feeding young cattle; and one of them has brought a sister with him to manage his household affairs, who sets an example, that I hope may be followed by all the pianoforte-playing farmeresses in Scotland, as she personally assists in every variety of active employment suited to her station. I was told that all the milk in the dairy is taken to her every morning, and is never seen again till she has churned it into

butter; and that the profits of her poultry-yard, which amount in most places to considerably less than nothing, are, by her skilful management, sufficient to pay for all the tea and groceries used in her brother's house.

The drive from Wick to Thurso is about twenty miles long, through a highly cultivated country, where fields of the richest grain, and substantial farm-houses, ornament the scene; but the less we say the better about beauty, for the road is as level and as treeless as your drawing-room floor. A folio page is now in existence, attested by the clergy and gardeners in the county, containing an exact catalogue of all the trees growing in Caithness a hundred years ago, in which even the currant-bushes are recorded; but since then, by the indefatigable exertions of Mr. Traill, the late Earl of Caithness, and my father, the woods and forests could not so easily give a census of their population. Some of our own, at a distance, look very like tattered umbrellas!

The first view of Thurso from the south, in a fine day, is exceedingly striking and beautiful, including the gigantic headlands of Orkney. The

"Old man of Hoy" standing a thousand feet above the sea; the Pentland Frith connecting the Atlantic and German Oceans, and sprinkled with a multitude of ships; the tall abrupt rocks of Holbourn Head; the charming bay of Scrabster, considered the best harbour on this coast; the river sweeping through the town; the elegant bridge; the new church, larger than any north of Inverness; the bright yellow sands; the numerous villas and farm-houses; and though last, certainly not least, the ancient towers of Thurso Castle, built by George Earl of Caithness, in 1660, and belonging since 1718 to our family, now represented by the county member, Sir George Sinclair.

I was amused to hear that some English travellers inquired once at the Thurso inn, whether there were many fine pictures at this castle, when the waiter, who had never beheld any others, confidently replied, that the collection was first-rate, very old, and well worth seeing. The connoisseurs hastened over accordingly, their heads filled with Corregios and Titians, when, melancholy to relate, not so much as a single Sir Joshua Reynolds or Jameson reward-

ed their pains, but merely eight generations of very formal looking ancestors, appearing exactly like every other person's ancestors, the most remote portraits exhibiting the smallest waists and largest wigs, while they all became less exaggerated towards our own time.

A recent addition has been made to Thurso Castle, planned and executed by Burn, the cobbler-general of worn-out houses, by whom ancient edifices are mended, cleaned, dyed, and repaired, to look as good as new, or even better. When A—— perceived flaws in the architecture of several old castles lately, he wished they were all "Burn'd" like ours. Certainly the situation here is somewhat uncommon. In former times, showers of spray from the ocean used to dash up to our drawing-room window, when the waves, curling and grating along the shore, sometimes struck at the foundation with animated vehemence, and rebounded among the rocks, till at length a breakwater was raised to defend the wall. My grandmother Lady Janet used to describe, that many years ago, when sitting by her own fireside, a vessel was wrecked off the coast, so near the turrets, that she

could hear the people's voices, yet though every effort was used on behalf of the crew, "to yield them hope, whom help could never reach," not a life was saved from the wreck!

You might have imagined, that in such a position as I have described, this house was near enough to the sea, but my father liked the peculiarity of being so intimate with the wild winds and waves, so he caused a strong pier to be raised between the old castle and the water, on which Mr. Burn has contrived securely to perch a terrace walk and an appendix to the building. I hope it may turn out as long-lived as the Irishman's railway, which was to last for ever, and might afterwards be sold for old iron.

Several very handsome new apartments are here, from the windows of which I can at this moment count a procession of twenty vessels in full sail, some of which come so close, they are tacking into the very room, while the stormy surge beats up so near to where I sit, that it seems to undermine the very floor. We had a dispute here once, whether the bright blue ocean, sprinkled with white sails, was not as beautiful an object, as a green park dotted with trees, be-

sides being fully more varied, and I wish you were present to award us the superiority. The roughest and strongest tide on the Scotch coast is through the Pentland Frith, running at the rate of nine miles an hour. It is what our old housekeeper calls "a contramaceous and cantankerous sea;" and on the opposite coast of Holbourn-head and Orkney, where the time-worn rocks stand up as straight as an arrow, the waves are leaping ten or twenty feet high, becoming so perfectly white with foam, they look like apparitions starting out of the water, and vanishing again, while the vessels flitting silently and tracklessly along, like wreaths of mist at the horizon, are now and then lighted up by a brilliant gleam of sunshine shed upon the water, as if a path of glory were stretched across, which it would be a long day's journey to pass over.

On the beach at Thurso may now be seen the hulk of a ship wrecked under our windows last winter, and many tragical accidents have occurred at various times to the little herring vessels, forty of which pass this way in the evening, dancing on the waves so perfectly

joyous and safe looking, that last night I had actually the courage to wish myself on board of one. Nothing can be more like the life of a gambler than that of a fisherman. Sometimes they make ten pounds at a single haul, and often not tenpence in a day. I was particularly sorry for one Caithness fisherman this year, who had caught sixty crans, each equal to a barrel of herrings, at a single draught, worth about L.30, but wishing to complete the hundred crans, he tried another successful pull, which sunk his boat, worth L.100, carried away his net, and left the unfortunate speculator with nothing but his life remaining. How constantly we are reminded, that "slow and sure" is the best rule in pursuing wealth, and that we crush the butterfly by snatching at it too eagerly.

When the present Duke of Sutherland dined many years ago at Thurso Castle, our fishermen were eager to prove the productiveness of this coast; therefore two and twenty different kinds of fish were placed on table at once, including salmon, cod, turbot, ling, tusk, haddock, and every thing that swims, besides an odd fish,

called, from its resemblance to the feline species, the cat-fish, and considered a great delicacy, though not a very prepossessing one. The salmon-fishing of this river was then let for L.1000 a-year. It is recorded in the parish books of Thurso, that in 1786, no less than 2560 salmon were taken out of the river at one sweep of the net! Such is the violence of the tides at sea, when the billows get into a rage during stormy weather, that cod and ling are, by the force of the waves, frequently thrown alive upon the shores at Canisbay.

It is pleasing, in this remote country, to see so universal a confidence in the safety of life and property! Not a door or a window is fastened at night, not a shutter closed, and no means of defence provided, not even so much as a red hot poker. The old alarm-bell is speechless, and Oliver Twist might be thrust into the butler's pantry at any hour of the night or day, without danger or difficulty. No provision being made in Scotland for the maintenance and confinement of insane persons, an old woman used, when I was here last, to haunt this house, causing great annoyance to its inhabitants, by con-

cealing herself under the beds, or in the closets. A lady on one occasion, hearing the drawers in her dressing-room opening and shutting most unaccountably, as it appeared, of their own accord, hurried in to ascertain the cause, and found this poor maniac nearly undressed, and shaking out all her gowns to select the one she liked best for herself. This unfortunate creature on another occasion stole up to the top of a turret, where the maids were assembled, locked up the whole establishment, and threw the key into Thurso river, intending to keep them in perpetual imprisonment; and thus no hour of the night or day was secure from her incursions, sometimes in anger and sometimes in jest. These two states of mind border very closely on each other, in cases of derangement, of which I know one very curious instance. When the Duchess of —— first showed symptoms of insanity, she was sitting with our friend Lady —— at dinner *tête-à-tête*, apparently in great spirits and good humour, during which she occasionally made little pellets of bread, and fillipped them across the table at her companion, who at length took up the jest, and did

likewise, on observing which, the Duchess instantly started up with flaming eyes, seized the carving-knife, and hurried furiously toward her companion. Lady —— fled for her life, and she used to make her auditors tremble when describing her flight through the long narrow passages of —— Castle, and how she saw the tall figure of the Duchess in a white dress, striding along and brandishing the knife in her hands. Fortunately Lady —— reached a distant door, and locked herself up, but there she remained in a state of siege for several hours before the servants came to her protection. The Duchess remained ever afterwards in close confinement, but no such salutary restraint is laid on our visitor from Thurso, who was still alive on my arrival, but fortunately did not hear of our being come in time to leave her card for us.

In the old Castle some years ago, we had an aged housekeeper, who claimed the gift of second-sight; and when walking one evening near the shore of Thurso, she suddenly gave a startling scream, and told the people near her that a boat had been upset on the bar of the river; naming three men who were drowned,

and one that she saw swimming to land. The friends who accompanied her perceived nothing of this, and laughed at her; but next evening, about the same hour, the boat she had described actually was lost there, and all the three fishermen she had named perished. How truly it has been remarked, that "the veil which conceals futurity was woven by the hand of mercy." This old housekeeper insisted, also, for the honour of Thurso Castle, that one room was haunted, though I never could exactly ascertain who had been murdered there, nor in what shape the apparition might be expected. She always gave an impressively superstitious shake of the head when speaking of this apartment, saying, that once she had attempted to pass a night in it, but what took place must never be told; only, on that memorable occasion, it was well known, that, after an hour or two, she hastily vacated her position, and would never return there alone after dusk. A gentleman, hearing these rumours, insisted once, when visiting at Thurso Castle, on occupying this room, and came down to breakfast next morning with a large black patch on his forehead, gravely pro-

testing to the old woman, when she waylaid him in the passage, that the ghost had taken him out of bed in the middle of the night, and tossed him three times up to the roof of the room, till he was nearly killed, adding, that he never would sleep there again, a resolution very easily adhered to, as he was then leaving the country for good.

This morning we walked to inspect Her Majesty's Royal Castle of Scrabster. My father was the hereditary high Constable there; but it is to be hoped no probability exists of a Royal visit, as the accommodation would be somewhat deficient,—there being excellent grazing for a single sheep in the only apartment of which any remains are visible, and the small fragment of wall looks as if it could be thrown over with your little finger. Here, in former times, a Bishop of Caithness was murdered. The people in those days not being allowed a veto, took the law into their own hands, and, with a degree of cruelty which a New Zealander would be ashamed of, thrust him alive into a caldron, and boiled him to death. It was perhaps in allusion to this tragical story, that, when your

cousin dined with the Lord High Commissioner, expecting to meet nobody but clergymen in black, and saw, instead, only officers in scarlet, he suddenly exclaimed, "You have boiled all the ministers!"

The new church at Thurso, the chief expense of building which, in a very superior style of architecture, was incurred by my father, is quite a little cathedral, being the handsomest edifice north of Inverness, partly formed of a very hard stone imported from Morayshire. In the gallery here, the congregation resembles in dress and appearance what you might expect to see at any fashionable church in London, with bonnets *à lá Carsan*, scarcely a week old, from Paris or London. Women in the lower orders all wear clean white caps, or "*mutches*," as they are called, and large blue cloaks, like bathing-dresses, which hide all deficiencies, and give to their appearance an air of grave respectability. The expression of their countenance exhibits more than common acuteness; and one group of men in the lower classes reminded me of Raphael's cartoon, representing Paul preaching to the philosophers at Athens, their countenances

wore so criticizing an aspect of dubious approbation, apparently more intent on discovering the preacher's faults than their own. One aged female, most conspicuously attentive, at last pulled the hood of her cloak entirely over her face, and seemed wrapped in meditation; but I missed an old woman of former days, who always listened to the sermon on account of our family rather than on her own, and frequently held up her finger to our pew when anything was said on the danger of riches and prosperity, or on the evils of "Greek learning and Latin philosophy," a favourite subject of declamation with the late incumbent of this parish. Opposite to his pulpit, in those days, sat a learned English scholar and skilful physician, Dr. Torrens, for whom my father had obtained an Excise appointment here, that he might be induced by the emolument to settle and practise in so remote a district. An irresistible smile often stole over his intelligent features when hearing the new views of history, chronology, and the classics, then promulgated by a clergyman who had been appointed at the earnest request of the parishioners. Having, on one oc-

casion, allowed a young stranger to preach for him, our parish minister was observed to be restless and uneasy till the sermon was concluded, and stopped the congregation, when about to disperse, by standing up in his own pew, and saying, "My friends! you have this morning heard enough about the law, let me give you a little of the gospel!"

On another occasion he argued at great length with an antagonist, as learned in divinity, and more skilful in argument than himself; but after retiring apparently confuted, he gave out, on the following Sunday, a text suitable to the previous discussion, and then supposed a dialogue between a Pharisee and a Christian, wherein his opponent's reasoning appeared to considerable disadvantage, while his own replies were of course finally successful.

My late father, who valued what he possessed only in proportion as it might benefit others, transferred the patronage of this parish, when it became vacant, a second time to the inhabitants of Thurso, allowing them again the free choice of their own pastor, and in the present instance they have been extremely fortunate.

The first candidate who appeared, Mr. Taylor, after delivering one very eloquent sermon, was elected almost by acclamation! I accompanied my father out of church on that Sunday, when we were surrounded by a crowd in perfect transports with what had been preached, and their unanimous presentation was instantly and cordially acceded to. My father felt delighted to be so well out of "the scrape," as he considered it, having been apprehensive of serious differences; but next morning a deputation of the parishioners called at Thurso Castle to say, that upon further consideration, they began to fear the election had been rashly made, and it was thought desirable to hear more candidates. Foreseeing the anarchy and confusion this would occasion, my father replied that the congregation must abide by their original decision. They accordingly did so, which the fifteen hundred patrons at Thurso have never since had any reasonable cause to regret.

Mr. Burn, the dissenting clergyman here, has adopted an excellent plan to discourage backbiting among his congregation. The moment any individual begins gossiping out a story to

the disparagement of another, he gravely produces pen, ink, and paper, desiring his visitor to write down all the particulars, as they must be brought before the session. Having repeatedly insinuated this threat, a panic has been spread among informers and scandal-mongers, so that no one ventures to say a word of his neighbour which might not be printed. Besides the advantage of checking ill-nature, this expedient will increase his own efficiency, by proving his unwillingness to take up any evil report against members of the congregation; moreover, it seems a most judicious remark of Mrs. Fry's, that in addressing sinners, it is always best to remain ignorant of their peculiar failings, or the admonitions of a preacher become inevitably too personal. Rowland Hill used to say, that every sermon should have three R's in it. Ruin by the fall,—Redemption by Christ,—Regeneration by the Holy Spirit,—and if to these be added an earnest and affectionate application of gospel truth, to the hearts and minds of a congregation, no personal animadversions could improve the effect; yet I have known more than one preacher make very marked allusion to indivi-

duals when present, and an instance was pointed out to me once in England, where a nobleman of perfectly unimpeachable moral character had been literally preached out of his own pew. Those who are ambassadors should surely be careful that no private feelings of their own interfere with the due delivery of their message, but remember that they represent a Lawgiver, who summons all, without exception, to come and hear the words of eternal life ; that the very presence of any individual in church indicates a certain degree of obedience, which ought to be encouraged, and that those who are not against us are for us. Unless, therefore, an open breach be committed of any known commandment, or an obvious desecration of the Sabbath, all should assemble in church on the same common ground of being sinners in need of salvation, but the pulpit was never intended as a place for inquisitorial commentaries on the details of private life.

A stranger who preached last month at Thurso, having heard that a charity ball had taken place there, fulminated a vehement censure on all those who attended. The sacrament

being about to take place, he said, among other remarks, that " those who had gone to the tap-room were unfit for the Lord's table," and this being considered in the light of a prohibition, several residents who had attended the ordinance unremittingly for thirty years were thus hindered from appearing.

In respect to amusements for the young, I cannot but advocate the temperate use of those that seem innocent, rather than total abstinence, though the frantic excess to which they are carried in some houses, might make any Christian hesitate in doing so, as we are bound solemnly to remember, that those things which may be lawful when kept in due subordination, are nevertheless not always expedient. It has generally appeared to me, that the entire disuse of those relaxations natural to youth, too frequently leads either to vice, or to slothful indolence, or to hypochondriacal fancies about health. It is the excess of all earthly things that is to be avoided, and the highest exercise of Christian principle is, to enjoy, without abusing, the gifts of Providence. Men occasionally drown themselves in water, but water is not on

that account to be abjured ; and the exercise of dancing seems to have no more intrinsic evil in it, than running or leaping, if kept in strict moderation, and allowed to interfere with no essential duty. If we could get over what Lord Dudley called the " national insanity" of late hours, so that balls were to begin earlier, and end sooner, one of the greatest objections to that amusement would be obviated. A dance beginning at six, and ending at eleven, instead of beginning at eleven, and ending at six, might be equally agreeable, and could lead to no such dissipation of mind, as is now to be lamented in those who enter on the amusements of life to an extreme which obliges all rationally disposed persons to withdraw from them entirely. The ball at Thurso led to no excess either in hours or expense, but some political estrangement having previously taken place between near neighbours and old friends, it was thought desirable that they should meet on neutral ground, and associate once more on terms of cordiality ; therefore about forty persons assembled, and danced off any feelings of irritability which had existed, believing that in doing so, no violation of duty

was committed, while a restoration had thus been made to sociability and good neighbourhood, which it is so desirable always to preserve inviolate among Christians.

If the world had been partitioned into cells, like a honey-comb, and each individual's own sphere of action limited within a separate enclosure, none of those admonitions respecting our conduct in society, so lavishly scattered over the sacred pages, would have been recorded; but the miser who hoards his time without spending it well, goes to one extreme, while the spendthrift who wastes it on vain and heartless amusement, falls into an opposite excess. The true medium is found in Holy Scripture, where social intercourse among Christians is continually alluded to, though always in subservience to higher and holier duties, with the incessant observance of which, neither the pleasures, nor even the affections of this life, must ever be allowed to interfere.

There were two county newspapers published till lately in Caithness; and in the far north, the Court circular and the fashions are most assiduously studied, for whether Her Majesty be pleased to ride in Windsor Park, or to drive to-

wards Kew Gardens, is fully as much discussed here as in the more immediate orbit of her royal presence. In Ross-shire, I was amused to hear of a book club, where one of the farmers ordered the novel called "Almack's," being anxious, he said, to ascertain what the quality were about; and throughout the Highlands, every *on dit* respecting Buckingham Palace travels as safely and expeditiously northwards as the last new bonnet, being only a little enlarged, and a very little more trimmed and embellished, during its progress, though still in some degree resembling the original pattern.

Connoisseurs in comfort would find it a perfect study to see Barrogill Castle, belonging to the Earl of Caithness, Lord Lieutenant of this county. It is, as auctioneers often say, "every way suitable for a nobleman of rank," with all the internal elegance of a house in London, and all the exterior dignity of an ancient Highland residence. Some admirable improvements have been recently made by Burn; and the staircase, which was formerly outside, as high as the drawing-room floor, is now thrown into the house, while several windows have been thrown

out, which were greatly wanted. In those peaceful times, when there is no longer any necessity for a castle to be fortified, it is pleasing to see the gloomy strength of former days exchanged for a more smiling aspect; and here we found some first-rate pictures by the best masters, a haunted apartment, abundance of interesting family portraits, and a forest of the very best trees that Caithness can produce.

Apropos of trees, when we went in a gig yesterday to see Castle Hill, belonging to Mr. Traill, the most persevering improver now in the North, I was very nearly killed in consequence of our Caithness horse taking fright at a tree! He was evidently unused to the chequered shadow of leaves on the ground; so he started in the well-planted approach, pricked his ears, backed, and, when a gentle breeze at length caused the branches to flicker about, he fairly set off in a panic. If we had encountered so terrifying and unusual an object, as another tree, almost twenty feet high, in any more dangerous part of our drive, the consequences would probably have been fatal; but no successor having appeared within ten miles, our Caithness

quadruped had time to compose his nerves, after witnessing so extraordinary a phenomenon.

A celebrated tide runs near Barrogill Castle, called "The merry men of Mey," very noisy and obstreperous indeed, but no subject of merriment to vessels, as they have to go off their track many leagues sometimes to avoid the vortex, and, when caught, are swept back on a stream, like the rapids of a rapid river. This is said to have been the scene of Grey's "Fatal Sisters," translated from the Norse tongue.

> Now the storm begins to lower,
> (Haste, the loom of Hell prepare,)
> Iron sleet of arrowy shower,
> Hurtles in the darken'd air.

When about to leave Caithness, we discovered that the only post-chaise in this county had been already bespoke to act in the capacity of hearse at a funeral, which seemed to me like one of Harlequin's transformations. That this useful vehicle might have time to be altered and dressed for the melancholy occasion, and that the one only pair of post-horses might have leisure to rest, we hastened our journey,

and with difficulty obtained leave to hire it; so I have at last been actually reduced to travel, like Miss Pratt, in a hearse! How multifarious are the duties of this old chaise!—the four wheels must be all running off sometimes in different directions! All the happy pairs in the county probably make their wedding excursion in it, if they make one at all,—it takes the Doctor to his patients, the boys to their school, sportsmen to the moors, guests out to dinner, and the dead to their last resting-place! The horses, too, once probably grandees in a well-groomed stable, giving some old dowager her daily airing, or sharing the labour of a dozen other hunters, are now reduced to be servants of all work, summoned at every hour of the night or day, on every occasion of business, pleasure, profit, or loss, and bound to be always, like soldiers when they enlist, "free, able, and willing."

One of the most amusing stories of smuggling I know, took place at Barrogill Castle, when the late Lord Duffus resided there as guardian to the late Earl of Caithness. Having clandestinely imported sixty hogsheads of claret for his

own private drinking, Lord Duffus thought it might be unsafe to lodge them all in the house; therefore he built fifty-eight of them up under so enormous a peat-stack, that it became the astonishment and admiration of the whole neighbourhood. He then carried the remaining two hogsheads into Barrogill Castle, and wrote an anonymous information against himself to the excise-officer at Thurso, who hurried over immediately to investigate the case. Lord Duffus received him as a friend, cordially invited him to dinner, whispered confidentially that he could give him a capital bottle of claret, and after dinner, when the worthy man was nearly half seas over, showed him the two hogsheads, and said they were scarcely worth seizing, but he hoped his friend would return often, as long as they lasted, and share the last drop with him; after which they shook hands, and exit in mutual good humour.

JOURNAL

OF A

TWO DAYS' RESIDENCE IN SHETLAND,

WITH A

FULL, TRUE, AND PARTICULAR ACCOUNT OF THE HABITS, MANNERS, AND LANGUAGE OF THE NATIVES, THEIR DRESS, APPEARANCE, AND CUSTOMS;

ALSO

NEW AND ORIGINAL DISCOVERIES RESPECTING THE GEOGRAPHY, ASTRONOMY, NATURAL HISTORY, AND GEOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF THOSE ISLANDS;

WITH A DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THEIR HISTORY, PAST, PRESENT, AND TO COME.

Dedicated to the Royal Society.

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"We cannot but wish that Sir Isaac Newton and Sir Joseph Banks had lived to see this day!"—POPULAR PHILOSOPHER.

Ask where's the north?—at York 'tis on the Tweed—
In Scotland, at the Orcades,—and there,
At Greenland, Zembla, or, I can't tell where.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—Every new country is interesting to visit once, though the real compliment is, as you say, to go a second time. I

like to ascertain with my own eyes, what is, or is not worth seeing in it,—whether it be better or worse than my own,—how people set about being happy there, and how they succeed. At one time I expected quite as much to visit the moon as the Shetland islands, but I have lately indulged a sort of hopeless wish to venture on a voyage of discovery towards the extreme verge of her Majesty's dominions, that I might pass the longest day of my life in that country where two days are turned into one, by having no intervening night.

Islands are troublesome articles to deal with, especially as I have not the courage of a butterfly by steam, therefore it was a considerable exertion the first time I invited myself to go, but after talking it over with myself during some weeks, it became a matter of course, that wind and weather permitting, or even not permitting ! the experiment should be tried, consequently one cold stormy morning, to my own great astonishment, we found ourselves on board the Sovereign, a fine large, well-grown steam-boat, which touches at Wick once a-week, in full boil, on its route from Leith to Lerwick, and picks up all

those courageous passengers who may have summoned up resolution and enterprise enough to venture almost within sight of the north pole.

Nearly every gentleman before whom I have happened to mention Shetland during the last year or two, has long intended to take a glimpse of these stormy isles, but while swarms and clouds of travellers are migrating to the most unattainable foreign districts, our own northern Archipelago remains unknown and unnoticed, wasting its sweets, if it has any, on the desert air, and scarcely upon visiting terms with a single individual. Pray, bring your telescope here some day, and try, as we are doing, to get a distant peep of Iceland.

Travellers are not seen to much advantage in steam-boat costume, and it is certainly odd that, wherever a crowd is assembled in a morning, they all look vulgar; therefore we glanced round at the mob of miscellaneous beings assembled on deck, all shivering, in cloaks of every shape, size, and colour, little hoping to meet with the very agreeable society which we soon afterwards discovered on board, or indeed

with any thing that could be called society at all.

The General Assembly of Scotland having recently dispersed, we found a ship-load of divines returning to their congregations in the north, some apparently clever and eccentric, some extra-eccentric, and others pious, learned, and communicative, who added all that was in their power, and that was a great deal, to the pleasure of our voyage, and almost every one of whom gave us most cordial invitations to their fire-sides and manses in Shetland. Mr. Hamilton, the very talented and agreeable incumbent of Brassay, near Lerwick, became a perfect encyclopedia of information and entertainment as long as we continued in the ultra-north, and Mr. Watson of North Yell afforded us many curious details respecting his parish and people. He officiates in two churches, divided by a broad and dangerous ferry, where frequently on Sunday six rowers have endeavoured in vain to carry him across, but after pulling incessantly for three or four hours, and coming in sight of his church and the assembled congregation, he has been obliged to relinquish all hope of land-

ing, while it was about equally difficult to reach the opposite shore. One of Mr. Watson's elders, who had to travel eight Shetland miles, a very vague measurement, besides crossing a wide ferry before getting to church, was so exceedingly zealous that never during many years did he once miss divine service! This venerable Christian was unfortunately drowned lately while trying to save the crew of another boat lost near his own house. Mr. Watson says the people of Shetland, in general, testify an extreme value for public ordinances, and though his parish consists of only eight hundred persons, he generally averages at the sacrament about three hundred and fifty communicants. They are all so indigent that the collection at church seldom exceeds threepence!

The chief or only wealth of Shetland arises from the fisheries, and from the manufacture of wool, which is of so very superior a quality that stockings are knitted by thousands and tens of thousands in these islands, at all prices, and are sometimes fine enough to be sold for two guineas a pair! I find it registered in the Rev. Mr. Sands' account of his own parish

Tingwall, near Lerwick, that "formerly the stockings of Shetland were sent to Holland, but the difference of their value, since they found their way to other markets, particularly the English, is said to be nearly equal to the land-rent of the country, and this difference must be ascribed to the patriotic and benevolent exertions of Sir John Sinclair." During the eighty years of my father's life, he published one hundred and six volumes, and three hundred and sixty-seven pamphlets, written with the one all-prevailing desire to benefit his native country, and while he has been called from his labours to that rest which remaineth for the people of God, it is pleasing in every part of Scotland to trace the success of so enterprising and persevering a patriot. The universal diffusion of English sheep over our native hills, was an era in our national history, and has nearly doubled the value of many Highland properties, where, owing to ignorance and mismanagement, the Scottish wool had become so exceedingly deteriorated and scarce, that, on an average, four millions of pounds had to be annually imported from Spain. In consequence of some advanta-

geous discoveries respecting wool, communicated by my father to the Highland Society, a board of inquiry was instantly formed, of which he became chairman, sparing neither time nor expense to render it efficient, and presenting to the committee a hundred sheep, which he had collected from the royal flocks of France, from Spain, Shetland, and England, to the latter of which he gave that name, now so universally known, of "Cheviot sheep." He travelled in person to every county where the growth of wool was peculiarly successful, and at an inn twelve miles from Edinburgh, he gave the first-sheep-shearing festival which had ever taken place in Great Britain, where a multitude of persons from all countries sat down to a collation, each adorned with pastoral badges and emblems, and where one of the amusements consisted in seeing wool which had been shorn in the morning, spun, dyed, wove, and formed into a coat during a single day.

Nothing in D'Israeli's Curiosities of Literature can be more singular than the origin, progress, and termination of my father's single-handed efforts to collect the Statistical Account of Scot-

land, a work for which no precedent existed in the world, as even the very word "Statistics" was invented by himself, a fact recorded in the old cotemporary edition of Walker's Dictionary, who remarks that no name had previously existed for a science now so generally understood. To anatomize the society, population, history, manufactures, and antiquities of a great nation, required enterprize, perseverance, and even enthusiasm; but unintimidated by obstacles, he addressed separate letters to one thousand clergymen, suggesting his plan and requesting their aid. To some of the more indolent he wrote three-and-twenty times, besides applying to their patrons and friends, to gain their co-operation, and the last effort he made to arouse any individual's exertion was by forwarding him an epistle written with red ink, explaining that this was a final attempt to rouse his patriotism. After receiving many thousand letters, he employed missionaries at his own expense to collect the details of such parishes as were not reported by the clergy, and wrote some himself. In the course of seven years this arduous work was completed, after which the author used his in-

fluence to obtain for a reward, nothing personal to himself, but a grant from government, to the "Society for the sons of the clergy," of L.2000, and presented besides to that useful institution, the copyright and whole pecuniary benefit of his labours. To himself and his family remained only the gratification of witnessing his entire success, and the honour which he deserved for so vast and patriotic an undertaking. Adam Smith remarks that there are three ways of pursuing fame. "Those who wish to enjoy celebrity, whether they deserve it or not,—those who seek to deserve, but care not to enjoy it,—and those," like my father, "who seek both to deserve and to enjoy it." Few ever loved his country more,—few ever laboured as perseveringly to serve it,—and few ever more deeply valued its approbation. When age and infirmity precluded the possibility of new exertions, he often looked back on the difficulties so laboriously surmounted in preparing the Statistical Account of Scotland, with a pleasing consciousness of having served his country so essentially. Even when verging towards the grave, and turning his thoughts to a better world, he heard

with satisfaction, though not consulted on the subject, that a second edition of this great work was in progress. Before long, volume after volume appeared, containing no meed of praise for his exertions! no tribute of gratitude for his liberality! no mention even of his name! A great edifice had been raised, and the original architect who planned the whole, incurred the expense, engaged the artizans, obtained a reward for their labours, and generously claimed no recompense for himself, was now entirely overlooked, but nevertheless could he have foreseen the end from the beginning, his strong impulse to do good as he had opportunity, would still have prevailed. From that period, my father calmly but indignantly ceased to mention a subject once the source of so much pleasure, and latterly we avoided any allusion to it. In the volume which came out immediately after my father's decease, a cold, late, and business-like acknowledgment of his name appeared, but as no copy of the new edition is forwarded to his family, I did not borrow one to peruse it. The heart that should have been cheered, and the eye that should have been brightened by

that page, were at rest for ever, and even if ample justice had been awarded, the praise that was due could have mattered little then to him who was beyond its reach, or to us who valued it only for his sake.

The Shetland accent is peculiarly pleasing, but still retains so strong a tinge of Norse, that the somewhat foreign pronunciation led me to imagine several of the gentlemen who spoke to us, were either Frenchmen, Danes, or even Irish, much more than Scotchmen. A rumour had reached us, before embarking in the steamboat, that a great man was on board! No less a personage than the Danish governor of the Feroe Islands, son of the prime minister of Denmark! His father had been ambassador from that Court to England, a man of great abilities and intelligence, who had educated our *compagnon de voyage* with great care, and bestowed on him this very inadequate appointment, merely from a desire to improve that frozen region of ice-bergs and whales.

The governor of Feroe, Mr. Ployen, had with great difficulty obtained permission from his own rulers to travel in Scotland, and had

brought a large detachment of his people to study agriculture, in what region of the earth do you suppose? In Shetland!! There the spade husbandry, wooden harrows, stone querns, and little hand-mills, are a century, at least, behind East Lothian, and the world in general! Miss Edgeworth's Farmer Good-enough, would have seen little cause to complain of modern innovations, where Captain Hay's patent plough has never yet been heard of, and several genuine Scandinavian implements of husbandry are still in fashion, but "*parmi les aveugles, un borgne est roi;*" and the Shetlanders may, perhaps, be some steps in advance of their more northern neighbours.

Having no small curiosity to see Mr. Ployen and suite, we hastened down to dinner, more eagerly desirous to satisfy our curiosity than our appetite, and I was considerably entertained to see the Captain ceremoniously place his Danish guest on his right hand, and treat him, during the banquet, as nearly with royal honours, as the small cabin of our floating palace could admit, while the governor himself seemed exceedingly bored at exciting so much notice.

I have seldom encountered a more entertaining, frank, well informed foreigner, than Mr. Ployen, a tall, fair, and very dignified looking personage, who spoke English as well as any native,—or better,—and who seemed anxious to make the conversation a means of giving and receiving as much information as possible. When he sketched a lively graphic description of his own desolate regions at Feroe, I began to fancy it would be quite impossible ever to get far enough north, as Shetland seemed a mere every-day affair in comparison of the immeasurable precipices now described, when he laughingly concluded his picture by saying, that we estimated the height of our shore by hundreds of feet, and he by thousands! I must some day explore a north-west passage for myself, and measure the rocks of Feroe.

Sumburgh-head, in Shetland, rises about eight hundred feet abruptly out of the ocean, and at North Yell, the iron-bound coast, stretching forty miles along the shore, forms a gigantic barrier of towering rocks, as if the angry, ceaseless billows of the great Atlantic had worn down, and bent the very earth by their weight.

What a mere insect man appears in such scenes; but here would be a place for geologists to chip down the world with their hammers, and to frame half-a-dozen theories, or to draw from the rocks themselves a history of their origin. In some parts of Scotland, the charters of estates were anciently carved in Gaelic on the rocks, and here would have been abundant space for such documents. A person ignorant of the law once mentioned, that a gentleman had proved his claim to an estate, and on being asked in what way, confidently replied. "He has carved it on stone!"

While sitting at dinner in the cabin, we heard many interesting anecdotes of the dangers encountered by fowlers in scaling the rocks of Shetland and Feroe, where fatal accidents are so frequent, that the people sometimes say to each other, "your grandfather fell, your father fell, and you must follow too." Others boast over their companions, saying, "Your father died in his bed, but mine went off like a man!"

The common mode of rifling the birds' nest is, for the fowlers to suspend themselves over a

beetling cliff of many hundred feet, merely by a single rope forty or fifty fathoms long, which is so fretted and hacked by the sharp edges of the rock, that it occasionally breaks, precipitating the unfortunate adventurer from so great a height, that the body, when found, sometimes retains scarcely a vestige of ever having been human. From habit, they become so reckless of danger, however, that frequently more than one descends by the same rope, though I scarcely know any occasion when it would seem more desirable to have two strings to our bow.

Captain Philips mentioned, that some time since, a father and two sons were suspended in this way over a deep chasm, when the youth who hung uppermost hastily told his brother that the rope was breaking, therefore it could no longer support them all; desiring him to cut off the lower end, on which their father depended. The young man indignantly refused thus to consign his father to death, upon which his brother, without another moment's hesitation, divided the rope below himself, precipitating his father and brother both to instant destruction! We had an eager discussion, after

hearing this shocking story, whether it was possible to have acted better than the amiable son who fell a sacrifice to duty and affection, during which Captain Philips suggested, that he might have leaped off the rope, and left his father to be preserved! This was a flight of generosity beyond the imagination of any one else, and we received it with great approbation. Indeed, we could scarcely have applauded him more, if the worthy Captain had actually taken the leap himself.

A succession of similar stories ensued, all tending to prove that the Shetland rockmen are fit to be rope-dancers at Astley's; but nothing interested me more than hearing a description of the cradle at Noss. It was formed by a celebrated climber from the Isle of Fowlar, who heard, that off the point at Noss, a detached perpendicular pillar stood one hundred and sixty feet high, and being perfectly aloof from the shore, was considered quite inaccessible. Determined to do the impossible, and establish his fame for pre-eminence on the rocks, besides being bribed with the promise of a cow if successful, he with great difficulty scrambled from

a boat to the summit of this lofty point, where he fixed a pulley, and suspended a basket, which could be drawn across to the mainland, carrying sheep or men in comparative safety over a chasm sixty yards wide, and four hundred feet deep. Fancy yourself performing an excursion, in this way, between the top of St Paul's and the monument: but that is not half high enough! Where shall we place you then? Suppose yourself swinging in an arm chair between the summit of Snowdon, and the peak of Cader Idris! After this curious enterprise had been successfully achieved, the poor man forgetting how much more difficult it is to go safely down than to ascend a precipice, unfortunately did not take advantage of his own spider-like bridge, but in trying to regain the boat, his foot slipped, and he fell headlong down, where his body was never seen again! a hero dying in the arms of victory.

The Governor mentioned, that lately at Feroe, a fowler descended safely by the usual conveyance of a rope, but when about to be drawn up again, owing to some awkward entanglement, he arrived at the surface with his

feet upwards. His alarmed friends thought his head had been cut off, and felt so relieved to discover their mistake, that the whole party burst into a simultaneous peal of laughter, while the adventurer was very glad he had any face to put on the matter at all, and laughed heartily also.

The upper part of these cliffs generally overhangs the base; therefore the rockmen, when desirous to obtain a footing, are obliged to swing themselves many yards out in the air, that the re-action may shoot them back in contact with the precipice, when they instantly cling to any little projection that offers, and, after landing on it, anchor the end of their rope to a stone, and proceed with a small hand-net, stretched on a hoop, to spoon the eggs out of their nests, depositing them carefully in a sack which they carry behind; and when the unlucky bird sees her loss inevitable, by a curious instinct she often pushes out the egg to save herself. An enterprising fowler, standing on a projection once, with a sheer precipice both above and below him of several hundred feet, observed the end of his rope become suddenly disengaged

from its moorings, and swing like a pendulum far into the distant space. If it escaped entirely away, he knew that death, either by a fall, or by the slower and more dreadful process of starvation, must become inevitable; therefore, perceiving that the rope, before it finally settled, would swing once more almost within his grasp, he earnestly watched the moment of its return, made a desperate spring forward in the air, clutched it in his hand, and was saved.

Travellers are in a perplexing predicament when relating what they see or hear, because everything is either so common-place as to be scarcely worth mentioning, or so extraordinary, as to be quite beyond belief; and your credulity will take leave of me altogether if I continue on my tight-rope any longer. I shall merely describe one thing which amused and astonished me exceedingly. Our steam-boat passed near Coppensha, one of the Orkneys, which presents a gigantic barricade of rocks, inhabited by millions of birds, which we saw, though I had not time to count them, sitting in rows like charity children, with black heads and white tippets, ranged along every crevice in the cliffs. Cap-

tain Philips caused several guns to be fired, when an uproarious noise ensued, which can be compared to nothing but the hurraing of a whole army. It seemed like a long loud roar, accompanied by the echoing and re-echoing of guns,—a whole platoon of cannon, till at length I fancied that the commotion could scarcely have been more deafening from the mob and artillery of London on the day of Her Majesty's coronation. Above, below, and around, the sea, air, and rocks seemed all one living mass of birds, screaming at the full pitch of their voices, rushing through the air, careering to the very clouds, flickering in circles over-head, zig-zagging all round us, and then dropping like a shower into the ocean.

Nothing in the way of animal life ever amazed me so much! I wonder if any one on earth can imagine it?—no! certainly not! seeing is believing, and nothing else will help you. When I thought how many fish must be necessary to feed so countless a colony of feathered mariners, the miracle seemed greater still. The poor sillocks and herrings must have a sad time of it! Shetland is the metropolis of birds,

and the greatest ornithologist might weary himself here. In this cloud of living creatures are included kitty-wakes, cormorants, sea-larks, gulls, white and black scarfs, sea-parrots, maws, and a species of puffin, commonly called lyres, or, as the natives pronounce them, "lawyers!" It would occasion rather a sensation in the Parliament House to hear how coolly the Shetlanders mention having shot a brace of lawyers in a morning! We could ill afford them a battu in Edinburgh!

Seals and otters abound on this coast, but I did not observe a single mermaid, though these are the bays where Sir Joseph Banks advised my father to catch them, using for bait, a looking-glass and comb! Many interesting and "authentic!" stories are told here of mermen and mer-women, which would amuse you exceedingly, therefore, pray muster up a considerable stock of credulity, and listen. Far below the region of fishes, these mer-ladies and gentlemen, who are of supernatural beauty, exist in an atmosphere of their own, in which they seem able to live with very tolerable comfort in coral palaces, and sleeping on beds of oysters. When desirous to

pay us a visit in the upper regions, they have power to enter the skin of any amphibious animal, and shoot through the water, but no son or daughter of the ocean can borrow more than one sea-dress of this kind for his own particular use, therefore, if the garb should be mislaid on our shores, he never can return to his submarine country and friends. A Shetlander once having found an empty seal skin on the shore, took it home and kept it in his possession. Soon after, he met the most lovely being who ever stepped on the earth, wringing her hands with distress, and loudly lamenting that having lost her sea-dress, she must remain for ever on the earth. The Shetlander having fallen in love at first sight, said not a syllable about finding this precious treasure, but made his proposals, and offered to take her for better or for worse, as his future wife! The merlady, though not, as we know, much a woman of the world, very prudently accepted this offer! I never heard what the settlements were, but they lived very happily for some years, till one day, when the green-haired bride unexpectedly discovered her own long-lost seal skin, and instantly putting it on,

she took a hasty farewell of every body, and ran towards the shore. Her husband flew out in pursuit of her, but in vain! She sprung from point to point, and from rock to rock, till at length bounding into the ocean, she disappeared for ever, leaving the worthy man, her husband, perfectly planet-struck and inconsolable on the shore!

In some of those islands, the rent is paid, as it is also at St. Kilda, in feathers, which are sold for ninepence per pound; and one of my father's Caithness farms had a clause in the lease, entitling him to a pepper-corn rent of 1000 sea-birds' eggs every year, though he never levied the tax.

The governor of Feroe mentioned, that, during their fishing-season, his coast is so surrounded by shoals of bottle-nosed whales, that the seamen go out in a long array of boats, and drive them, like flocks of sheep, towards the shore. When this cavalcade approaches land, a dreadful scene of carnage ensues, while the terrified monsters become infuriated, and, in attempting to escape, they frequently upset one or two boats. The men become nearly frantic

with excitement on these occasions, the wounded animals bellow with pain, the ocean is dyed red with blood, and troops of sea-gulls, which always attend on these occasions, become so stained with gore, that, before taking wing to depart, they appear to be birds of scarlet plumage.

Escorted in great state by the governor of Feroe and suite, A—— and I landed at Kirkwall, Captain Philips having granted us leave of absence for an hour and three quarters, but his one hour shrunk into a miserably short one, and his three quarters became nothing at all, as we were soon peremptorily summoned back on the shortest notice, by an arbitrary little bell, rung most impatiently before one-half our curiosity had been gratified. Travellers who rashly apprentice themselves to a steamboat for a certain number of days, must expect less attention to the picturesque than to the station most convenient for taking in coals, or letting out passengers, as we experienced on this lamentable occasion.

The very ancient and interesting cathedral of Kirkwall, dedicated to St. Magnus, was begun seven centuries ago, by Ronald, Earl of Orkney.

It is the most perfectly preserved in Scotland, and looks almost as large as the whole city put together. You would fancy it an arrival from Brobdignag among the Liliputian buildings around, and the whole structure would do honour to any Episcopal diocese in England, being in truth a sort of country-cousin to Worcester Cathedral, as they are in a similar style of architecture, though the masonry of Kirkwall is coarser, and the plan scarcely so dignified. It is wonderful that the poor inhabitants, who could scarcely rear dwellings for themselves, should produce so magnificent a pile for Divine worship! The roof is quite entire, but the lofty steeple was most unfortunately struck down by lightning several years ago, which causes a sad blank in the *coup d'oeil* at first, though much architectural beauty still remains. The long and solemn ranges of pillars and cloisters inside have at length become so perfectly green with damp, that they appear like some wonderful cave, over which the sea had broken for ages. Indeed the celebrated cave at Flamborough-head is not very unlike it, and certainly neither more mouldy, nor more weather-stained.

We entered this hoary pile with feelings of profound reverence and admiration, preparing our minds for a solemn remembrance of the great men and the eloquent divines who once frequented those sacred walls, generation after generation, many of whom lie side by side in the last long sleep of death. The first tomb-stone which caught my attention was exceedingly handsome, exhibiting a coat-of-arms on one side, and bearing a long panegyrical inscription on the other. While gazing at this impressive memento with all that profound respect due to the illustrious dead, our guide gravely informed us that this tablet was raised in honour of the late dancing-master at Kirkwall!

Not far off, lie the venerated remains of our illustrious Scottish historian, Laing, whose memory is deserving of the utmost reverence and admiration from all his countrymen; and a few steps distant we were shown a curious tomb placed under a low heavy stone arch, like an ancient fire-place, which was built in this peculiar form by special desire of the person underneath, because an enemy had once threatened to dance on his grave.

We discovered the tombs of Bishops Murray, Stewart, and a whole conclave of reverend fathers, their names, arms, and mitres, carved in stone, and surmounted by inscriptions, some too long to be read, and others with a great deal to say which had become totally illegible, though none were, I trust, what Pope calls "sepulchral lies, our holy walls to grace." The child we are told of, who saw nothing in a church but laudatory inscriptions, made a most natural mistake when he asked, "where all the bad people were buried?"

I was astonished at the trouble taken by our foreign friend, Mr. Ployen, to decypher every epitaph in which there appeared generally more sentiment than feeling; but he seemed to have a remarkable knowledge of heraldry, and being the first Dane who had recently invaded Scotland, he was evidently anxious to claim for his country some credit in the founding of this Cathedral. With the patriotic hope of producing evidence to prove its Danish origin, he left not a crevice unexplored, so that even a rat could scarcely have enjoyed its hole in peace.

but all in vain,—the Cathedral of Kirkwall gave no sign !

Mr. Ployen did not relish our saying, that the Orkneys had been ceded to Scotland by the Danes, but interrupted our discussion with a deprecating bow and shrug, saying, they were only mortgaged for a small sum, and the money had since been tendered by his government three times without success. Rather an awkward transaction if true.

In the choir of this cathedral, Divine service is yet performed, but the whole ancient edifice is soon to be put on the retired list, and superseded by a fine, vulgar, modern upstart, which is in full progress here. All that green baize and brass nails can do is done, to look handsome, but I greatly prefer the green mould and yellow rust of the old school, and really would not grudge the good people of Kirkwall a few coughs and rheumatisms rather than let them desert this fine old fabric, which has ornamented the world so long.

Mr. Ployen expressed much surprise on seeing our square pews at church, with a table in

the centre, saying it gave him the idea of our intending to play at whist. No separation of seats was made long ago in Scotland, and none is allowed now in Denmark, where so strict an equality is preserved in the House of God, that on one occasion, a common soldier found himself accidentally placed next the king. He hastily started up, but his majesty stopped him, saying, "Stay, friend! remember there is no distinction here!"

The inhabitants of Kirkwall are intended never to keep carriages, seeing a staircase runs across their principal or only street, which is entirely paved with large flags, and so narrow, that opposite neighbours might almost shake hands from their respective windows. Upwards of four thousand women are employed in plaiting straw for bonnets at Orkney, and the annual value of what they make is averaged at L.30,000. Girls of eight years old, and even the very oldest men, can earn a livelihood by this means; and during the long winter evenings, little sociable parties of ten or twelve meet at each other's houses, and work together, beguiling the hours with a snug gossip, and a cup of bohea.

The Castle of Orkney shelters one or two plane trees cowering within the walls, and hanging out a leaf or two, here and there, to prove that they are alive, which is almost a questionable fact, even with those few witnesses to attest it, and the country round seemed clothed in sackcloth. The bishop's "manse" has been very handsome in its day, though now worn to rags, and the market place is neat and extensive.

You may search round the world, and find nothing more hopelessly ugly than the Isle of Sanda, which lies so perfectly flat and bare, that it might be taken for the whale's back on which Sinbad the sailor landed. The ground, from a very short distance, becomes quite invisible, therefore the few houses we saw seemed floating on the surface of the sea, and the people seemed all walking on the water. It gave me a better idea of the deluge than any picture I ever saw.

An alteration was made respecting the lighthouse here some time ago, which produced most disastrous consequences. The station formerly was at North Ronaldsha, more than three miles

off, and many foreign ships, consulting old charts, were misled in their bearings, and totally lost, though such events used not to be universally deplored among the Shetlanders formerly, when a stranded vessel was considered quite as lawful a capture as a stranded whale. One of our clerical friends mentioned, that some years ago three brothers sailed from Hamburgh in different vessels on the same day, and after cruising to various ports without meeting, they were all wrecked on the shore of Sanda at the same time, and their ships completely lost! What a melancholy rencontre they must have had on this desolate and fatal coast.

A Danish princess lies interred at our family burying-place in Caithness, who met with her death under somewhat similar circumstances. She had married the chief of the clan Gunn, who passed himself off, at the court of Denmark, for being a considerably greater man than he really was, and when she became desirous at length to see the splendid residence he had described himself to possess in Scotland, he gallantly insisted on preceding her there, to make the most magnificent preparations, but no Caleb

Balderstone being then on the spot, he was put to his wit's end one evening, by beholding a fine vessel in the distance, containing his bride and her suite in full progress homewards. In an agony of consternation, he caused false lights to be hung out along the coast, the consequence of which was that the ship foundered, and her body, richly dressed in jewels, having been washed on shore at Clythe, is buried there with all the splendid decorations she wore. It was unfortunate for the princess, that she did not see some such conclusive reason for refusing Mr. Gunn, as Lady Penelope Primrose in more modern times, who declined the addresses of a gentleman belonging to that clan, giving as an excuse that she could not tolerate the idea of being called all her life "Lady Pen-Gun!" Persons afflicted with a name which admits of being punned upon, must often wish, in desperation, that some friend would leave them an estate, as an excuse for changing it.

Our Danish fellow-traveller was shocked beyond expression at this tragical tale, and shrugged his shoulders, till they nearly met over his head, on hearing the catastrophe. I was amused

at the unmitigated censure he bestowed on our country, for allowing debtors a sanctuary within the precincts of Holyrood Palace, where they enjoy unmolested liberty to range through the park and hills around, giving splendid entertainments, and receiving company, while the poor deluded creditors are in actual starvation. As Paul Pry says, " I don't mean to hint that there is anything in it, only it seems odd !" and we had very little to urge in defence of national custom on this point. Mr. Hamilton mentioned that the chief extravagance of his poor parishioners consists in tea-drinking to the most marvellous excess, and that those who are starving would rather purchase tea than bread. You never heard of tee-totallers on so large a scale ! the indulgence amounts almost to an absolute vice, and the Shetlanders must positively establish a toast-and-water society immediately. About L.25,000 worth of bohea is annually entered at the custom-house in Lerwick, besides which, a great quantity is smuggled by Dutch fishing-boats. One poor man in the parish of Brassay, who had the expensive infliction of a tea-drinking wife, was cheated, by her secretly

selling his goods to obtain tea! He was observed once to purchase the same peck of meal three times over in one week, being always assured that his children had eaten it. A Highland laird once remarked, that the Scotch peasantry were ruined by forsaking "the good old porridge of their ancestors!"

Mr. Hamilton says, the kindness of all his very poor people towards each other is astonishing. Like the widow's cruize, their last mouthful is shared with those who are more necessitous than themselves, and no single individual will ever starve, unless the whole population perish together. Poor and destitute as most of them are, he deprecated any plan of assessment, because it would destroy all those feelings of mutual sympathy and independence which are the sole remaining comforts they possess. It certainly is one of the deepest mysteries in this perplexing world, what system is best for relieving indigence, because while our almighty Creator has ordained, for wise and holy purposes, that the poor shall be always on the earth, He has at the same time laid a deep responsibility on the rich, to do the very utmost which libera-

lity and good sense can dictate, to relieve the weight of woe and painful endurance laid on our suffering brethren. I believe it would be an act of mercy to sweep from the face of the earth most of those large charitable institutions which encumber it, except such as are for the blind and the incurable. If an hospital were instituted, where every living being could receive, on application, a dish of porridge, a flannel petticoat, and a bed, there would probably be an end of all exertion in the world. There must be, as a motive to industry, the apprehension of that misery, which it is nevertheless our business to relieve when it comes, by encouraging and teaching lessons of provident economy. I know many places at present, where industrious women can get no needle-work at their own firesides, because they are so completely under-sold by large institutions, in which the expense of house-rent and coals not being paid by individuals, the work can be done much cheaper. If a general distribution of clothes were made to the poor, in three days more than half those gratis wardrobes would be lodged at the pawnbroker's; and in considering the failings and defects of

every human scheme for the general advantage we cannot but mournfully exclaim in the language of Scripture, "who will show us any good?" The two most eminent philanthropists in Scotland, Dr. Chalmers and Dr. Alison, are completely opposed in opinion respecting the most eligible plan for the poor; but while we lament the difficulty of ascertaining what is best, nothing, at the same time, can exonerate any Christian from anxiously studying this important subject, and conscientiously expending time and money, according to his utmost ability, and according to the best of a carefully formed judgment, on the great Christian object of succouring those whom our Divine Saviour has so solemnly committed to our care, measuring the degree of our devotion to Himself by our diligence in "feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and administering to the sick;" yet the great scriptural rule of letting charity be so private, that the left hand shall not know what the right hand is doing, would forbid those great public establishments, which are in many instances pernicious to the real interests of those whom they are intended to benefit; and

the Bible surely does not recognize or inculcate any general and arbitrary assessment, which is to be deprecated, for the sake of the poor, whom it would degrade and demoralize, more than even for the wealthy, on whom it would become every year more oppressive and severe.

Mr. Hamilton mentioned, as an instance of the generous feelings engendered by sympathy in distress, that, during the late scarcity, almost amounting to a famine, an indigent old woman, having been presented with a boll of meal, divided it equally with her starving neighbours. It always appears to me, that, in this world, those who have real miseries bear them well, and those who have none invent some petty grievance to grumble at; for some people endure the pleasures of life less cheerfully than others bear its greatest calamities. A very indigent girl, not long since, after suffering all the saddest privations of poverty, met with an unfortunate accident, which made it necessary for the Doctors to amputate her leg; but when they cautiously imparted this frightful prospect,

she calmly replied, "Then I shall now have a leg the less to endure cold from!"

It was grievous in many places to hear a most heart-rending description of what the poor Highlanders suffered last season, when everything short of actual starvation was uncomplainingly undergone. It lowered the value of property so much to have these circumstances known, that in some places where estates were to be sold, the proprietor forbid any application on behalf of his tenantry to the relief Committee, in consequence of which, the funds, raised by a liberal subscription, were, I fear, very unequally distributed.

Another destitution, of yet greater importance, is deeply deplored in Scotland, and became a subject of serious discussion among the clergy as we approached Fair Isle, a bright green spot, like an emerald on the wide ocean. This place is quite a little world in itself, covered with grass of a most vivid and luxuriant verdure, but distant twenty-four miles from the nearest shore, being exactly half-way between Orkney and Shetland,—and there four

hundred of our countrymen live and die without the instructions or consolations of any clergyman. The parish to which they belong lies in a far distant island, whence Mr. Thomson, the incumbent, used to visit them once in a season, to perform all the marriages and christenings; but now, being eighty years of age, he is unable to encounter the fatigue of such a voyage; and it was mentioned, that the last time a clergyman arrived there, several of the children requiring to be christened were quite old and uninstructed, while one boy, when the service was performed on himself, swore most violently. The anxiety of these neglected people for ministerial teaching is so extreme, that they will laboriously row their boat any distance to bring a preacher, and only ask their expenses for taking him away, as it is considered ample remuneration for a voyage of fifty miles to hear a single sermon; and Mr. Watson of North Yell told us, that once, when detained accidentally beyond Sunday, the whole population crowded round him to hear the gospel, and listened with fervent attention.

Many rich people disapprove loudly of fo-

reign missions, confidently saying, "let charity begin at home;" and for them here is a noble opportunity. Neighbours and brethren of our own, who have little to enjoy here, and no one to tell them of happiness hereafter, suffer the most urgent want, while a small subscription might supply the moderate wishes of some resident clergyman, who would be welcomed with eager and grateful delight, bringing them the knowledge which they seem all to be thirsting for.

The deputations sent by charitable societies travel sometimes now at a most preposterous expense. A lady assured me that once a barouche and four arrived at her house in the Highlands, containing four gentlemen, who requested leave to see her pictures, and mentioned that they were a committee of clergymen from England, collecting funds for some religious object. Next day her old poultry-woman found several tracts scattered along the approach, and this expedition cost several hundred pounds, besides taking more than one clergyman away from his own charge. This is a wide world, in which there certainly is a great deal of good to

be done, but as none of us are like the tortoise, who could carry the whole world on his own shoulders, men who would really be useful must measure the utmost extent of their own individual ability, and do the very most which is possible, without attempting more, and too many parish clergymen would wander about like Wesley, who during fifty years never travelled less than 4500 miles annually. It was no bad jest on a certain itinerating rector of this kind, who frequently transferred his own work to a substitute, and preached in any parish rather than his own, that he should be nic-named "England, because he expected every man to do HIS duty."

These poor Shetlanders can afford no expensive deputations, but the half of what was paid for that one excursion which I have described, would place them permanently under the blessed influences of gospel light; therefore I beg to move a resolution, which you shall second, that our next foreign mission shall be established at Fair Isle. How much I should like now to send round a plate for your subscriptions! In that case, a missionary need not laboriously acquire

any difficult language, nor has he either a new religion to introduce or an old superstition to destroy, while he would be gratefully welcomed by a people, many of whom are mournfully sensible of their unhappy religious privations, and those who are not, need only the more urgently to be made aware of them. We find more excitement in sending to foreign heathens,—and they require all we can do,—but there are heathens at home with a yet nearer claim to pity, though less attractive to the fancy. I heard of a missionary meeting lately, at which a Cherokee chief was produced, covered with tatooing and feathers, to pray in his own unknown tongue, before a numerous congregation, and to make a speech extempore, or *extrumpery* as you say. Our poor Zetlanders would have no chance in comparison, yet the time and money expended by a foreign missionary on his long journey, besides studying Malabar or Hindostance, and diving into the depths of Brahmin mythology, might be occupied with far more immediate advantage if he set forth at once with the English Bible in his hand, to teach a people nearly as ignorant as any barbarians, but far more willing to learn;

and those who contributed to so desirable an object, might hope to reap a harvest of immediate success, and to be blessed by the prayers of many whom they had assisted to rescue from darkness, and to place in the marvellous light of the gospel.

In old times, the Duke of Medina Sidonia's ship, the Invincible, commanding the Spanish Armada, was wrecked off Fair Isle, when most of the crew, amounting to two hundred men, landed in fishing-boats. So numerous a swarm of guests would soon have occasioned a famine, therefore the natives murdered several, and hospitably entertained the rest. If supernumerary guests could be lawfully disposed of in this way, what a massacre would take place at some dinner parties we have seen. Both hosts and visitors were rescued from approaching starvation at last by the appearance of a ship from Lerwick. On that occasion, the Duke appeared near the shore to welcome his deliverers, in the splendid costume of a Spanish nobleman, but Malcolm Sinclair, a sturdy Presbyterian, who had come to entertain these foreign papists with all the rites of hospitality, nevertheless re-

marked, on being introduced to his distinguished guest, "I have seen many prettier men hanged on the Burrow-muir!"

These long twilights are very enjoyable, and I often wish that those who have more time than they know how to use, could transfer a few superfluous hours to those who find every day too short for half what they wish to do; but now that the stars are lighting their lamps it is time for me to extinguish mine. Since paper pillows are in fashion, you will know how to dispose of too lengthy a letter, so I must beware of being reduced to atoms, though it would sound extremely civil to tell a long-winded correspondent, that you never lie down without placing her letters under your head,—pray do not subjoin that they put you to sleep. "We're a' noddin'."

LERWICK.

I hope there's none offended
At me for telling this ;
For it was not intended
To be ta'en amiss.

BURNS.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—Can this possibly be me at Lerwick! I begin to think it may not be a dream! You once said, in an extravagant moment, that any letter was worth any money, so I hope you will retain the same opinion, while I now dip the pen of astonishment in the ink of veracity, that, since you have never been sufficiently enterprizing to travel so far, you may become proud of being related to any one who has, after hearing all our adventures by flood and field.

When a gentleman once mentioned having gone to see the lion at Exeter 'Change, a friend satirically enquired, "what did the lion think of you?" rather a perplexing question; but I hope our lions here are as much pleased with us as we are with them, seeing I am already more than rewarded for taking this very long step towards the Arctic circle, and planting my standard on the Castle of Lerwick.

A lady in Caithness, during one of our most unfavourable summers, when everything looked brown, parched, and barren, became astonished to hear a stranger talking in raptures about the richly verdant thriving appearance of all the scenery in our county. Of course she supposed him in jest, till it turned out, on enquiry, that he was a native of Shetland! Certainly here we see little beside grass and rocks, yet I admire beyond measure the bold massy features of the landscape, glittering beneath a rising sun; and there is something in it of unadorned magnificence very striking to a stranger.

Lerwick is one of the oldest-looking towns I ever remember to have inspected, and appears like a small burlesque upon Venice, a range of houses

being drilled along the shore, all standing up to their knees in water, while the sea washes six feet deep on their foundations; and instead of dark gondolas, like coffins, floating about on the crystal waves, we have light graceful skiffs gliding rapidly along, and bending their large white sails almost into the surf.

Last week sixty-three Dutch fishing-vessels sailed at once out of this beautiful and commodious harbour in the Sound of Brassay; and residents here all keep a boat instead of a carriage or cart, being their only means of conveyance. No seaman but a Zetlander could manage these very small canoes, like wherries from the Thames, with the sails of most disproportionate magnitude; but they manœuvre about in beautiful style, and the natives seem all nearly amphibious, looking as if they sat upon a dolphin, and holding the sail by a rope, which is let fly the moment a blast rises, throwing the sheet instantly at liberty. Accidents, however, do happen only too frequently on these rough and dangerous seas; and it is a singular custom, that drowned persons are always buried far from the ocean, as if their spirits might still

be disturbed by the horrors attending their decease. Do you remember Lady ——, when she heard the sudden intelligence that a gentleman had been accidentally drowned in the river, close to her windows, instantly enquired, as her very first question, "Was he handsome?"

This is the first year that a tolerable inn has been established at Lerwick, which is considered a most remarkable era, and the style is about equal to that on board a second-rate steam-boat, being conducted by a most respectable landlord from East Lothian. If any wealthy traveller, wishing to be remarkably comfortable, had brought his own carriage and horses to Lerwick, he could not have penetrated beyond the pier, and by no possible contrivance could his equipage have been available in driving up to the hotel, which is in so narrow a street, that A—— could have easily made a long arm to touch the opposite house. I remember once meeting an English lady going by steam to Staffa, who said it was her intention immediately on landing, to order a post-chaise, and drive all round the island, but neither there nor here would the plan be very feasible, as not a

wheel is stirring in the noiseless streets. That peevish Mrs. ——, the morning after her arrival at Venice, complained that she had been so disturbed by "the noise of carriages!" it was impossible to close an eye; but the streets at Lerwick are about equally carriageless, being a curious assortment of courts, connected by lanes, and intersected by stairs, one of which divides the High Street quite across, and some of the streets are even arched over at the top.

The only road in Shetland goes six miles towards Scalloway Castle, and we were told that but one gentleman ever had a carriage here, when he used to drive his wife several times up and down the whole distance, to give her an idea what a journey means. It might be said of him, as your old friend used to remark of her English relation, with a look of great importance, "He is the richest man in London! he keeps his chariot!" The short road to Scalloway is, like all short cuts, nearly impassable, leading over a peat-bog, to be cleared in a succession of leaps, but if any one wishes to see a Shetland pony shine, he should mount on his back, the heavier the better, and perform a

steeple chase over all the chasms and walls which lie in the way along the fine "corduroy road." Walking is, of course, a most necessary accomplishment in this country, where the shoes are made of materials so very substantial, that an old gentleman used to say, he wore in the morning three rows of nails on the sole, but for full dress only two rows.

Some spirited proprietors projected great improvements here in road-making, and would have summoned M'Adam himself from the deep; but unluckily one landlord, a *soi-disant* baronet, has, with short-sighted economy, put a spoke in all their wheels, refusing to let a stone be broken unless some very extravagant terms be conceded. This unfortunate impediment must be a great annoyance to all the residents, and I wish they could be delivered from it, "To be disposed of,—an old established grievance,—going very cheap!" Nothing but an act of Parliament can lay down a road here now, such as had been projected, not that the ambition of Shetland pointed to a mail with four horses, attended by a guard blowing his horn, and flying round the islands to carry tourists round

Noss and Scalloway; but no one can tell what half a century may produce, and on my next excursion to this region, I have promised to bring my chariot, while our friends have undertaken to provide a suitable road. Perhaps you may live to see some time a railway, like a great iron hoop, surrounding Great Britain, with the whole population circling round at full speed, as we see children at a fair, wheeling along on a "turn about."

The introduction of a weekly steamboat to Shetland has begun a new era in this country. Formerly all communication with other places became so tedious and uncertain, that none could be safely depended on. A few years since, one of the principal merchants here, who possessed more than twenty ships of his own, became so anxious for letters, that he sailed off to enquire for them personally at Edinburgh. There the postmaster objected to deliver any, saying, it would be too great an advantage to give him over the other mercantile houses at Lerwick, if he obtained his correspondence so prematurely, and it was not until after the

greatest difficulty, and legally proving his identity, that he could obtain the packet.

The lower orders in Shetland seem rather beneath the middle size, especially when compared to the tall Dutch skippers, stalking about in loose tunics, high caps, and heavy wooden clogs, which seem a most uncomfortable article of dress, being excavated in a solid block of wood, as if the foot had supernaturally forced its way in. We used to read in the Richmond play bills, of a hornpipe to be danced on the stage in wooden shoes, but here it could neither be light nor fantastic, as these slippers, liable to be shuffled off at every step, seem made to impede walking. The Dutch sailors exchange shoes with the Shetlanders for stockings, so that their traffic is easily set on foot.

The sheep in these islands look like goats or greyhounds, having long legs and lank bodies, and their colour is of that peculiar brown and blue which the Shetland stockings usually exhibit. Some are speckled of various hues, and go by the name of Jacob's sheep, though not lineal descendants of that flock. All the ladies

here employ their long evenings in knitting; and even the hard-working women, when carrying on their backs the enormous heavy "creels" which are used here instead of carts, yet contrive to have a perpetual stocking on hand. I met one cleanly dressed chatty old gossip, the sort of looking personage who hobbles on the stage at the beginning of a farce, exclaiming, "How my old bones do ache!" and she assured me with great exultation, that she manufactured a stocking per day, and that every article she wore was entirely of her own spinning. I liked to see her honest pride, and if the gown had been French cambric, she could scarcely have expected me to admire it more.

Before inns were invented at Lerwick, the proprietors and merchants kept open house for all strangers without exception, and must often, I should guess, have found occasion to look over the inventory of their plate, when exercising such boundless hospitality. A party of well-dressed, plausible looking foreigners arrived here once, and having previously ascertained the names and connections of all the chief inhabitants, they passed muster during several

weeks, living at the principal house on the island. One Sunday, however, their hospitable host was privately beckoned aside by a friend, who had observed his companions in the pew at church, and recognized them as a party of well-known black-legs from Paris! He recommended their being ejected from the house, in the most expeditious manner possible, but their entertainer replied, with characteristic liberality, that, "though he would now be on his guard against imposition, yet while his guests continued to behave like gentlemen, he would persevere in treating them as such." Previous to departing, the ungrateful visitors attempted some swindling transactions, which were, of course, counteracted, owing to this timely detection, and they were opprobriously dismissed from Shetland; but, unfortunately, their schemes prospered better in Orkney, where they afterwards cheated some merchants to a large amount; and it was a curious termination of the whole affair, that upon leaving Kirkwall, they very handsomely transmitted to the parish clergyman L.5 for the poor! This was an amusing sort of Robin Hood generosity, but some who deem it right

to refuse money collected for charitable purposes, unless they approve of the means by which it has been raised, would be rather perplexed how to dispose of such a donation.

Among countless instances of peculiar hospitality, it may be mentioned, that a Mr. Bruce received into his house some years ago, forty Russian shipwrecked sailors, maintained them during the whole winter, and sent the entire crew, at his own expense, back to their native country. He declined receiving any recompense, but the Empress Catherine privately obtained an impression of his family seal, sent it overland to China, and ordered a magnificent dinner service of the finest porcelain to be manufactured for him without delay. By some unfortunate oversight, the box containing this precious gift was seized at the custom-house, and sold to a Mr. Reid, in whose possession it still remains, though I cannot but grudge him every dinner he eats off it. Mr. Bruce, while he lived, lighted a large fire every winter night close to the shore, and had a barrel of meal ready to be cooked into porridge, for distribution among any number of poor sailors visiting those distant

shores. They were also allowed clean straw to sleep on at night, when unable otherwise to procure a bed.

The gentry at Lerwick are still so extremely kind to strangers, that our landlord should lock up his guests, as the only chance of keeping any, or he may perhaps be provoked at last to act like the innkeeper at Luss, who, finding himself nearly ruined by the parish clergyman beguiling away all his visitors, at last one night carried his sign to the manse and nailed it over the door.

One of the most uncommon subjects for astonishment, to a stranger, in Shetland, is, when he first discovers the very near neighbourhood of every gentleman's town and country house. The two are generally within sight of each other! We were shown Mr. Mouat's elegant residence in Lerwick, and looking full in its face, from the opposite side of a narrow bay, stands Gardie House, his country-seat! It is a large, handsome, well-windowed house, which seems to be staring about on every side and wondering when the trees will come up. Mr. Ogilvy has, what Robins the auctioneer would call a most magni-

ficent and desirable country residence, surrounded by gardens, terraces, and offices on an extensive scale, but, by the help of a speaking-trumpet, you might deliver a verbal message from his drawing-room in the country to his drawing-room in town; and Mr. Hay's rural retreat is exactly a ten minute's walk from his mansion in Lerwick. All the principal families here make a regular "flitting" every season, from town to country, probably leaving their P P C cards for each other, and, after taking a pathetic leave of the metropolitan gayeties, set out, by easy stages, changing horses as often as may be necessary, and plunging into the wilderness of rural enjoyment within half a mile. In London, those who have no estates often close their front windows for the summer, and withdraw out of sight, while etiquette forbids their being visible in town, and to the Shetland gentry the change is scarcely greater. If a Court Circular be ever established at Lerwick, we shall read a list of

FASHIONABLE CHANGES.

Mr. Mouat, for the summer, from the north to the south side of Lerwick Bay. Mr. Ogilvy and

family, half a mile west, for change of air. Mr. Ployen, from Feroe, on a southern tour in Shetland and Orkney!

Fort Charlotte, at Lerwick,—an imposing old fortification, all bristling round with guns,—is in good repair, and serves partly as a jail, where we saw four youths under fourteen, one of whom was a gentleman's son, confined in solitary cells, for a burglary committed at Orkney, when they robbed an old man of eighteenpence. They all maintained that the money was immediately to have been returned, as they merely intended a jest, but the law does not understand such practical jokes. The jailor's wife said, within hearing of the young criminals, while tears started to her eyes, that she never had seen more excellent boys, and pronounced their panegyric in terms so glowing, that a gentleman present thought it full time to remind her and the prisoners that such unqualified praise could scarcely be merited by young gentlemen placed under her husband's lock and key.

A stranger, who had landed with us from the steam-boat, was much entertained by a corporal who accosted him, when wandering about the

fort alone, and announced with great official importance, that he was "the Governor!" adding the important fact, that four thousand pounds of gunpowder were placed under his charge, but on inquiring it came out that he has no authority to fire, even if an enemy appear, and that he has the command of no garrison but himself. A party of mischievous boys at Lerwick, on one occasion, alarmed the whole surrounding country, by privately loading one of the superannuated cannons at Fort Charlotte and firing it off! Some part of the wall was shattered, in consequence of an extra charge having been thrust in, and a sensation was occasioned by the explosion like that caused to Sir Walter Scott's Antiquary when the beacon-fire at Fairport was lighted. The whole population of Lerwick flew to ascertain what enemy had landed to take possession of the island, and we can scarcely wonder at some panic being excited, considering that the nearest naval force which can be summoned to protect any part of Scotland is stationed at Chatham. If Paul Jones had a successor, he might land in Shetland any day, as he

did once in Galloway, and take the very tea-pots off the breakfast-tables.

On the last birth-day which George the Fourth lived to see, the flag-staff at Lerwick Castle fell prostrate to the earth, which was afterwards considered a prophetic omen. The very same pole is now so insufficiently propped up that all well-wishers of her present Majesty should subscribe to raise one, which shall promise, by its firmness, to see out the present century, or longer, if possible. Loyal as the inhabitants of Shetland are, however, their woods and forests could scarcely supply so much as a pair of Dutch clogs, and still less a new flag-staff, but we must suppose the trees were all cut down to show the sea views, which are so very fine. The tallest and grandest tree I saw during my stay on the island, was a stalk of rhubarb nearly seven feet high, which had run to seed, and waved its head majestically in a garden below the fort, looking quite shady and ornamental. It had been planted by some officers, and really did them great credit. The Arabians have a proverb, which I wish we may all live to see realized here, "Be

patient, and the mulberry-leaf will become satin."

I expected to observe Shetland ponies galloping in every field, but they are chiefly running wild among the distant unenclosed hills, where, in most instances, the fore-legs are manacled together. Nothing is trusted to the honour of a Shetland poney, but they are all shackled in a most uneasy manner, hobbling along like rabbits, which inconvenient contrivance ruins their paces afterwards. When well fed from an early age, they grow nearly to the height of a donkey, but some years ago, Mr. Hay reared a perfectly well-formed poney, which measured only twenty-six inches high. Not so tall as a moderate-sized hobby-horse! I have heard sportsmen talk in praise of a horse that would canter round a cabbage-leaf, but here was one literally capable of doing so. The very largest men ride these tiny little creatures at full speed, looking from a distance as if they had merely hooked on a pair of additional legs, being scarcely raised a foot off the ground, and yet racing rapidly along. How would a regi-

ment of cavalry look, mounted, or lowered rather, on these stout little chargers.

Many very curious arctic birds stray over to this country, and I have seen one most beautiful snow-owl, which had been killed in this neighbourhood, as large as an eagle, and the colour of a swan-down muff. Eider ducks are very abundant, and eagles so very destructive, that five shillings a-head used to be given for shooting them. Swans appear in great flocks during spring. I daresay you have not forgotten our friend, who said he had very nearly sent you a swan-down muff from the Highlands, and when we asked an explanation of the reason why so welcome a present never came, it turned out that he had merely "seen a flight of wild swans over his head, and wished he had a gun!"

Of course all the birds here must live on the ground, having neither hedges nor trees in which to form a colony, but the plovers and other unambitious kinds make themselves quite at home. I am told the crows build their nests of fish-bones, as a substitute for sticks, which shows a great deal of genius, equal to that of

the Greenlanders, who form their houses of whalebone. It is interesting thus to observe how nearly instinct can approach to reason, in adapting means to an end, but the one is born at once to its utmost perfection, and the other is cultivated or destroyed by the possessor, according as he employs it, and may be advanced, if used in a Christian spirit, to higher and higher perfection every day, stretching from earth to heaven, till it reaches the ceaseless progress of an eternal existence.

Nature is outlined along this coast on so magnificent a scale, that we scarcely miss the softer touches, which give grace and beauty to a landscape. All that rock and water can do, is done; and while ornamental vegetation is entirely wanting, that which is useful seems abundant, especially in the valley of Tingwall, where grain and vegetables ripen in their utmost perfection; the pasture is so excellent, it would have transported an Argyleshire laird, who was asked some time since whether he had been disappointed in his first view of Staffa, when he replied, "Quite the contrary! I was told the

island pastured only twenty sheep, and I counted fourscore !"

The labour and expense to which several proprietors have gone, in cultivating trees and gardens, do prodigious honour to their perseverance, patriotism, and taste; but in a climate where gooseberries scarcely ripen on the wall, and apples are unknown, what can be done? We have all a tendency to that respectable weakness of thinking our own country the best in the world, and the enterprising cultivators here, may console themselves about their unproductive soil, by saying, as the Duke of Wellington said of his army, " It is given to me to make the best of !"

The youngest children in Shetland can make an income of twenty shillings per annum, by catching the small fish named " sillocks, or pars," abounding in swarms here, which owe their value to the oil extracted from them, two thousand barrels of which were manufactured in one year, from those diminutive fry, not measuring above four or five inches long. Thus food and light become easily accessible in a country

where grain is scarce, and where the days are not over long.

In the churchyard at Tingwall, this inscription appears on an old tomb-stone, "Here lies an honest man!" It seems like an implied imputation on all those buried near him. There is more truth perhaps in that simple memorial, than in a panegyrical epitaph I was busy reading at a certain cathedral lately, wondering how so great and good a man could ever have been spared out of the world, when the beadle, observing my occupation, quietly said, "He was the very reverse, ma'am, of all you see there!"

We had an excellent sermon at Lerwick from the parish clergyman, Mr. Barclay, formerly professor of elocution at Aberdeen. He gave us so edifying an address, that if I could attend church in Shetland without crossing the sea, it would give me pleasure to go often. The innkeeper conducted us to his own pew, and I had scarcely time to settle myself comfortably, before the clerk, a most respectable man in black robes, began publishing, in an easy gossiping tone, the banns of several marriages. Not seeing any objection to the proposed alliances, I

forbade none of them, but began speculating how it could possibly happen, that in this strange place, the clerk's voice and physiognomy seemed quite familiar to me. He sung particularly well, being one of the best "precentors" I know, and after a moment's perplexity, it flashed across my recollection, that this was actually "mine host" from the bar! We almost expected to find a charge for the pew in his bill, but our expenses from beginning to end in Shetland could scarcely cover the point of a pin.

Nothing could exceed the hospitality and kindness we received from Mr. Hay, who is quite a northern lord of the isles, his name being as intimately connected with Shetland as Bonaparte's with St. Helena, and his house becomes a home to every stranger who reaches these shores. A great distinction is made here between "Scotchmen and Shetlanders;" but the Scotch hospitality, for which we are justly celebrated, is almost outdone by our northern neighbours, many of whom were most kindly urgent that we should measure our visit by weeks rather than by hours. I have promised, if any wind blows me here again, to remain as

many days as will enable us to see every thing thoroughly ; so, considering what scarce commodities good days are, our visit may probably extend throughout a whole season.

On Monday we discussed in long and anxious debate with Mr. Hay how that one only morning we had for seeing all Shetland, could be most advantageously disposed of, and he entered into our case with the same mature deliberation as if I had consulted him about the investment of my whole fortune. The day threatened every thing ! wind, rain, mist, and cold ! nothing could look more unpropitious, but still some adventure must be achieved, and as we could not visit both Scalloway Castle and Noss Cradle, we weighed the castle against the precipice, balancing and rebalancing their merits with the most careful precision, and puzzled beyond measure which must kick the beam. At last it suddenly occurred to me that I can see a castle any day, but such a cradle as that of Noss never, therefore the scale began to preponderate greatly, when Mr. Hay being summoned on business to Lerwick, committed us to the custody of his son, ordering ponies to the door in case we preferred

Scalloway, and a boat if we determined to try a second childhood in the cradle.

As Burns remarked, "the plans of mice and men are liable to go awry." Nine hours afterwards, when Mr. Hay returned, he found us still seated in the drawing-room, having seen neither the one place nor the other, as unfortunately a squall of wind, with bitter torrents of rain, had come on, accompanied by a fog, which cut the head off every precipice and hill. It was the sort of rain that never stops, being dogged-looking and obstinate, proceeding from large mountainous clouds, hanging heavily down, as if Ben Lomond and Schiehallion had mounted overhead, therefore we resigned ourselves to a very pleasant chat in the house, with the agreeable family circle of Mr. Hay, joined by Mr. Hamilton, who had crossed from Brassay to meet us again. As Chateaubriand desired a friend to inscribe his name on the pyramids of Egypt, that posterity might never guess he had actually left the country without inspecting them, we must get our signatures engraved on the cliffs at Noss.

It has been long remarked, that the gentry in Shetland use their long winter evenings to great

advantage, in reading most extensively, which becomes so obviously the case in conversing with them, that I began almost to regret our own days not being equally short. Perhaps also the cold winds here assist in sharpening people's intellects, *à propos* to which I am about to start a perfectly new philosophical theory on this very subject! Warm climates certainly do enervate the mind, as we see that the lowest scale of intellect prevails in Africa, China, and the West Indies. Italy and France are greatly inferior to England;—Scotland excels them all, and even our great magician, Sir Walter Scott, before writing his Pirate, or his journal, took a sharpening in Shetland. Now, this all combines to prove, on undoubted premises, like Phrenology or Animal Magnetism, that peculiar acuteness should be expected in minds nearest the pole, and if you think a course of popular lectures on the subject would "take," perhaps I could sketch out the prospectus. Common phraseology favours my discovery, as every man who makes too clever a bargain with his neighbour, is said to be "too far north for him!" and, besides, the most bril-

liant magazine in Scotland is edited by Christopher North! Need I say more?

Instead of travelling over Shetland with us, Mr. Charles Hay very obligingly showed me a chart of it, on so large a scale, that three inches are given to each mile, and not a single peat-stack seemed wanting, therefore we made a leisurely tour over the wide expanse, pausing occasionally to hear elaborate descriptions of the curiosities we ought to have seen, and of the accidents we might probably have met with; all very interesting, but also rather tantalizing.

During a short promenade, we inspected one of the primitive mills frequently used here to grind corn, exactly similar to those of Norway, and I wish the whole board of agriculture had accompanied us to be diverted at the sight of this antediluvian machinery. It consisted of four very low dykes, with a turf roof, beneath which, a small stream running in a trough not four inches deep, turned a wheel placed horizontally instead of perpendicularly, so that half the force was neutralized, and there you have the whole concern!

Near the Cleik'em-in-Mill, we were shown a most amusing little miniature cottage, containing one window behind, one before, one in the roof, and a door, but there are five apartments inside. Burn or Gillespie might have been proud of laying out the accommodation to so much advantage, but it was all planned and executed by the proprietor, a custom-house officer, on hospitable thoughts intent, who wished to have spare beds for his friends. The dining-room is so very small that any one sitting at table, must rise and stand quite upright against the wall, if the door be opened; but this superb residence rejoices in a name larger than itself, being called "Glenspleuchen," and the owner may always keep up his dignity like the gentleman described in an old ballad,—

> "Stately stept he east the wa',
> And stately stept he west."

The finest remnant of a Teutonic Castle which ever enchanted the society of antiquaries may be seen on the island of Mousa, twelve miles distant from Lerwick. It stands about forty feet high, looking externally like a small pyramid of

Egypt,—or some pre-Adamite conformation,—or an old glass house—take any comparison you like best. It is composed of two circular walls, one within the other, like the ivory balls from China, leaving a passage about five feet wide between. This interval is said to have been used for a place of safety during war, and as these retreats, from their winding about, were called dragons or serpents, it has been conjectured that an allusion to such ancient sanctuaries may have originated the allegorical romances, afterwards so popular, relating to beautiful Princesses who were guarded by monsters, and rescued by dragons.

There is, in most well-constituted minds, an instinctive respect for rank, which certainly ought to exist in a high degree, if, as in many cases, it only adorns what is in other respects pre-eminent, and acts as "the guinea stamp" on that which is already gold. In a country like Shetland, without any resident nobility, I scarcely think, that if all the pleasing, well-bred people we conversed with had been insensibly transformed into dukes and duchesses, it could have made our evening circle more agreeable

or entertaining; but at present, the great theme of conversation in every house, and the most deservedly popular person in the far north, seems to be a young nobleman, the first English peer who ever penetrated into Shetland. It certainly is most gratifying to a part of the world, usually forsaken and neglected, even by those who are its natural residents, that the inhabitants have been repeatedly visited, on terms of cordial kindness and intimacy, by one who might choose his own society in any part of Great Britain, and whose estates are almost equal in value to any one of the three northern counties in which, for the last two years, he has resided. The young men in Shetland expected nothing but luxurious indolence from an "English Lord" possessing unbounded wealth, whose guardians had recently purchased an addition to his vast estates to the value of L.900,000, but they were astonished at his arriving across these dangerous seas, having performed a voyage of one hundred miles in an open fishing-boat, and still more that, being an accomplished scholar, and accompanied by one of the most pious and learned tutors at Oxford, he neverthe-

less excelled in all the field-sports and athletic exercises to which they were accustomed.

The three predecessors of Lord Ward were each, in their day, pre-eminent for something. The first was so distinguished for his personal appearance, that in the well-known print you have seen, representing Lord Chatham's death, his figure was made the most prominent of all. My grand-uncle, Lord Dudley and Ward, who succeeded him, expended so many thousands every year in building churches, and in the most lavish charitable benefactions, that he was justly called "the rich man's model, and the poor man's friend;" and his son, the late Earl Dudley, Secretary of State to George the Fourth, though his great abilities were tarnished by an extraordinary degree of eccentricity, was, nevertheless, one of the most brilliant wits and accomplished scholars of his time. Though an only son, yet from infancy he never knew the happiness of domestic life, having been, at the early age of six months, placed by his rather whimsical parents in a separate house and establishment, where they occasionally visited him, but his education was entirely superintended by

a succession of nursery governesses and tutors, and he always declared that his only experience of a happy home was when placed at last under the roof of Professor Dugald Stewart, at Edinburgh. His life of early solitude engendered those peculiar habits which occasionally clouded the lustre of his shining abilities, and among other strange customs, he acquired so unconquerable a habit of thinking aloud, that his intimate friends used to say, in allusion to his two titles, that "Dudley was speaking to Ward." The ludicrous effect produced by these public meditations during his Majesty's cabinet councils, became a principal cause of his retirement from office. On one occasion, when a gentleman obligingly took him home in his carriage, to avoid a shower of rain, he conversed diligently with himself during their progress, saying, "I suppose he will expect me to ask him to dinner! I'm afraid it must be done." His companion being fond of a jest, instantly commenced an accompaniment, muttering to himself quite audibly, "If he asks me to dinner, I shall certainly not go!" Upon hearing this, Lord Dudley laughed heartily, made an apology, and insisted on the invitation

being both given and accepted, which accordingly it was. A fall from his horse, on the continent, seems to have occasioned some disease of the brain, which brought a melancholy cloud over his latter years, and at his own express desire, all his papers were destroyed, leaving no record behind worthy of his great intellect, before it darkened into the gloom of night.

The steam-boat being about to sail from Shetland, we were now called on to decide either on leaving the island immediately, or staying an entire week. If we could have lingered on from day to day, I might probably have enjoyed myself there for a month, but it is a serious thing to accept an invitation from strangers for seven long days; and though the hospitable inhabitants appeared to think that those who once came there should never go away, while we were surrounded by more agreeable friends than I ever made in so short a time before, each of whom we were sorry to leave, yet we adhered firmly to our original plan of departing, "much and justly regretted." Meantime the weather had become stormy, the wind cutting like a scythe, and the atmosphere more-

over so hazy, that I felt almost tempted to settle for life in Shetland, rather than encounter the very formidable voyage before us. We wished it had been possible now to summon the obliging genii who carried Prince Camaralzaman a thousand leagues without disturbing his slumbers! I envied every bird that flew past, and scarcely dared even to look at the sea, thinking how much too intimately acquainted we should soon become; but after a PPC dinner with Mr. Hay, we embarked, escorted by all the kind friends we had acquired at Lerwick, on board the steam-boat, or *Damp-skiff*, as it is appropriately named in our friend the Danish governor's language.

Having been always hitherto accustomed to consider Thurso Castle as the *ultima thule*, I could not get over the oddity of receiving the good wishes of our companions for a pleasant voyage south to Caithness, and certainly the prospect of its being safe or agreeable seemed momentarily diminishing. The captain expressed great surprise at my embarking on such a night of fog and wind, while a poor woman,

who had brought three ponies to be transported, said the evening was too rough for them, and led her little flock ashore. I very nearly determined to accompany them back, and had not quite made up my mind on the subject, when suddenly the vessel started off in full career, the skiff containing our convoy of friends gradually vanished in the fog, the waving of handkerchiefs ceased, and Shetland was no more.

I felt much amused at a sailor, when we came on board, observing to A——, "I thought you would not stay long, Sir! the climate is too cold for any gentleman!"

What a night this was! I dared not go below at all, but turned two days into one, by remaining on deck, watching the endless twilight, while our tottering boat wrestled through the long sweeping waves, which tilted us up as if we had been placed on an enormous swing, and then away we dashed into the very bosom of the ocean, casting up a sheet of spray which drenched all the deck. Never were mountains so easily ascended! we sprung up the side of Ben Nevis or Snowdon at a single bound, and then

rushed down a Montagne Russe to the bottom,—

> While ev'ry mad wave drown'd the moon,
> Or whistled aloft its tempest tune.

The sun set, looking dimly and coldly through dark stripes of grey cloud, as if enclosed within a large iron grate, and burned to embers, but at last it went entirely out, so the world remained, with nothing visible by the cold wan twilight, but the moon, the stars, and myself. The whole creation seemed like a dream, so solemn and indistinct, as if the world were in a trance, but for the stormy wind which blew with unabated vehemence. Nothing brings to my mind so awful an idea of the wrath of God, as that sustained exhibition of His mighty power, to be traced in a hurricane. Even a thunderstorm is scarcely so impressive!

Morning was at last ushered in by the crowing of a cock most vociferously, and the sun himself emerged from the ocean like a globe of liquid fire, blazing over sea and sky, till both were illuminated with a flood of splendour. I should have liked, for the moment, to be an

Italian improvisatrice, and apostrophized the sun, moon, stars, ocean, and all the grand objects which had so recently delighted me; but the true sublime of their existence is only to be fully appreciated in connection with their great originator. I could not but think, if the sun were an eye visibly watching all we do or think, it would cause a most solemnizing restraint over all our actions. "What scenes that orb has look'd upon, since first its race began!" Yet this bright luminary is but one manifestation among thousands, gloriously testifying the perpetual presence and unceasing watchfulness of that omnipotent Being who created us and it,—whose eye is in every place, "beholding the evil and the good." Why do we not more constantly remember that great and holy Being, who "compasseth our path and our lying down, and is acquainted with all our ways."

I contrived to stand on deck, grasping hold of a rope, and clinging to the gangway, while Captain Philips traced out the whole scene of Sir Walter Scott's Pirate, and treated me to a running criticism on its merits, which might

have made a valuable article for the Quarterly Review. He had lately complimented the novel by a second perusal, and pointed to where once stood the ruins of Jarlshof Castle, and where the towering precipice of Fitful Head still keeps its station, looking almost supernatural. It rises four hundred feet perpendicularly out of the ocean; and at the moment we passed it, was crowned by fantastic wreaths of mist, blown into strange unearthly peaks, the whole of which looked so perfectly solid, that you might have fancied they were all actual rocks.

Captain Philips is a most fearless navigator, having once attempted the nearly impossible exploit of sailing through "the roost of Sumburgh," a boiling sea, which dashes tumultuously up to the base of a headland, towering bold and erect nearly one thousand feet high, thus raising its head to heaven, while storms and tempests rage unheeded at its foot. There the Atlantic and German oceans meet, on not very peaceful terms, and the waves break up with such gigantic strength, that the spray is sometimes thrown several hundred feet over the

rocks, falling back in a perfect Niagara of foam; and a long stream of turbulent billows may be traced three miles into the ocean, caused by this concussion of tides. Vessels inadvertently entering its vortex during a comparative calm, have been tossed, without hope of escape, for three or four days, with the waves washing almost in a stream over the deck. This description reminded me of the young lady who suddenly changed her mind about going to India, and gave, as her reason, that she was told, "every vessel, in crossing the line, remained three days under water!"

On the occasion of trying his powers in the Roost, Captain Philips penetrated forwards, till the Sovereign was literally boring through the waves, and being at length within a few buckets of becoming quite engulphed, she with some difficulty wheeled about, not quite drowned, and all but swamped. Since then, no audacious paddles have intruded within that very respectful distance at which we kept from Sumburgh-head, which has presided over some fearful shipwrecks. Many a noble vessel has there

sunk to rise no more, and many a despairing eye has fixed its last glance on those mighty cliffs! In 1595, the Earl of Orkney made a law, that if any man attempted to relieve vessels in distress, he should be punished in his person, and forthwith severely fined, at his Lordship's own pleasure, a discretionary power, exercised on so very extensive a scale, that he was finally executed at Edinburgh for his tyrannical and rapacious conduct. It was rather an awkward superstition among the lower orders long ago, that whoever rescued a drowning man, might depend upon receiving some mortal injury from his hand; but I hope the Humane Society can give a different report in modern times, and return a favourable verdict of "not proven."

The harbour at Wick is considered, during an east wind, the most dangerous part of a voyage from Shetland! therefore, seeing the wind riotous, and the waves tossing up their white curly heads in the bay, Captain Philips recommended that we should trust ourselves in preference to a small boat in Sinclair bay, which

accordingly we did, landing near the ancient walls of Ackergill tower, after a nineteen hours passage from Shetland; and really, considering all we had come through, I felt rather astonished to see myself alive and well. When did you ever hear of a voyage in which people were not within an inch of their lives? The innkeeper at Wick proved himself quite a genius in his line, having actually shown so much forethought, as to place a gig in waiting for us close to the surf, in which we deposited our heavy baggage, and walked to the town, two miles off, where, even on these desolate heaths, I could have exclaimed, like Gonzalo, "Now would I give a thousand furlongs of sea for an acre of barren ground." I would say of such a voyage, as Lord Chesterfield did of hunting, "Do people ever go a second time!" It certainly is a wonderful infatuation, and every excursion I make is always "positively for the last time, and by particular desire;" but again and again some dire necessity occurs, and I become "an involuntary voluntary" once more on the sea.

If you are desirous to have a letter answered

immediately, write always to the busiest persons you know, for they are always the most punctual, of which my epistle to-day is an undeniable instance. In considerable haste, and with a one-legged pen, yours, &c. &c.

FERRYTOWN.

Though to the west retreating,
Daylight may soon be fleeting;
Welcome ye darker hours,
Our sunshine is within.

My dear Cousin,—If our correspondence continues to be kept up so diligently, we shall both soon resemble the Spanish author, who wrote three times as many pages as he lived days in the world; and though he was considered a wonderful man in those primitive times, it is quite an everyday case now, for there are many living authors who can make a ream of paper "look foolish" in a month. Easy writing is said to be very hard reading, but we have weekly and monthly opportunities of trying the experiment now, as many who might become

standard authors, if they did themselves any justice, prefer writing against time. Such works come out in a galloping consumption from the first, published, bought, read, buried in oblivion, and succeeded by a fresh progeny from the same pen, all within the period of a Quarterly Review, and we are scarcely allowed time to form a more accurate estimate of their value than the student who hurried through Euclid in a week, and said it was very amusing, but he could make nothing of the pictures. Formerly the world was said to be divided into three classes. Those who live to read,—those who live to act,—and those who live to talk,—but you will allow we have a fourth class now, more numerous than all the others united,—those who live to write. I remember hearing of a whimsical publisher, who used, at his dinner-parties, to make authors take precedence according to the bulk of their works. The folios walked first, the quartos followed, the octavos came last, and, I suppose, the duodecimos dropped in to tea, but if your correspondents have rank on the same scale of measurement, this letter will pro-

mote me to a place of great distinction, as I mean it to be perfectly endless.

An Italian proverb says, " Every road leads to Rome," but here the most northern highways in Scotland are like the spokes of a wheel, all centring at Inverness. Though I would gladly sweep round a hundred miles, to avoid revisiting the same place, no other outlet presents itself towards the south, and therefore we resigned ourselves to a tiresome *da capo*. An Irishman got himself once into the greatest perplexity while counting on his fingers a party of three with whom he had dined the previous day, " There were the two O'Flanagans one, myself two; but who was the third? The two O'Flanagans one, myself two ! !"—now in the same way, to save repetition, my two visits to Inverness shall be reckoned for one, though, previous to our arrival, the journey of one hundred and twenty miles is worth describing, as we were pursued the whole way by the same hurricane which escorted us from Shetland. I enjoyed it now most comfortably, however, on shore, admiring the picturesque effect of ships in a storm,

and feeling most thankful not to be on board. Some travellers are in such haste, they would sacrifice their lives to save half an hour, and a gentleman who wished to proceed by the mail yesterday from Golspie to Inverness, finding it full, embarked in an open boat, which was instantly blown out to sea, carried off the contrary way, and finally dashed to pieces, but he was himself picked up almost alive, as far north as Helmsdale, by a Frenchman who was passing by chance, and arrived safe this morning at the point from which he set out!

When we reached Ferrytown the sea was covered with a drifting foam, so that even the mail could not think of crossing, and the ferryman's wife told us that, though he usually crosses in ten minutes, her husband had been at sea six hours during the morning vainly trying to get over. She was in tears most of the time, expecting him every instant to go down, but there he stood now perfectly safe; and it would have made you smile to see the little ordinary looking old man who had been the object of interest and affection so intense. Her feelings were rather more pleasingly testified than those of

Lady —— for her husband, when he nearly fell overboard from a steam-boat, and she called out to a sailor, "Take care of that man, for he belongs to me!"

The ferryman seemed quite ready to try an experimental trip across, if any of us had the least curiosity to go. He wore a silver snuff-box, given him for saving the lives of fifteen persons on a former occasion, which was some encouragement, and he seemed quite anxious for another opportunity of distinguishing himself. I saw the spot where a boat was upset thirty years since, when ninety-nine persons were lost, and we were shown the very wave in which an English gentleman, an admirable swimmer, was drowned some years ago, so that seemed quite warning enough! I prefer, at any time, avoiding a danger to escaping out of it, and, therefore, when we heard some time afterwards that a boat was actually in preparation to carry the mail across, I proposed a resolution and seconded it myself, that A —— and I should remain a day at the Ferry-house, which question was triumphantly carried by a Whig majority of one.

It was an interesting moment when we stood

on the shore, accompanied by several other travellers as prudent as ourselves, watching with strained eyes the little enterprising vessel tossing and tumbling on the angry billows as if it had been mad, but the letter-bags landed in triumph at last, having been blown over in nine minutes! Those who received their correspondence that day, little knew at what hazard these epistles were punctually forwarded.

A boatman who conducted us to the little cottage-inn at Ferrytown, informed me that the landlady only admitted "very particular people," but our reception was favourable, and she even condescended to cook some excellent hot cakes, as we were quite in the humour of taking what your friend calls "a big tea." This was the smallest inn I ever entered, but remarkably tidy, with table-cloths, sheets, and damask towels, as fine as in any gentleman's house. How unfortunate that the good old spinning days of Scotland are over: aged women no longer find a cheerful companion in their wheels, the busy hum of which used to beguile their lonely hours. Every cottage then amassed its treasures of home-made linen, so that while the younger

women, like our landlady, added to the comfort of their household and children by active industry, the aged used very frequently to occupy their latter days, with a melancholy satisfaction, in preparing their own winding-sheet, and the perfect pride and pleasure with which the dying now talk of having their "dead clothes" ready, would sometimes almost startle you.

As one of the greatest agricultural meetings in the north was taking place at Inverness, and two hundred gentlemen had assembled to dine here, from all parts of the country, we were quite astonished at our own good fortune in obtaining comfortable apartments at the Caledonian Hotel, where I scarcely expected to find standing room. Many years ago, my father succeeded in establishing a yearly wool-market at Inverness, where no one can say there is "much cry and little wool." The sales are so extensive, that more than 100,000 sheep generally change owners here annually, besides an incredible quantity of wool. From the window of our sitting-room, I can see at this moment a solid mass of several hundred people belonging to every rank and degree, who have stood immovable there

during two successive days! English cloth merchants, Scotch proprietors, farmers, factors, and shepherds, all evidently with their brains woolgathering, are so busy making bargains, that they mind a shower of rain no more than the sheep do they are selling, while the weather is hopelessly dismal, and the sky of one universal leaden hue, as if our whole world were under the canopy of a tin dish-cover.

We are amused with observing how much character may be traced in the different ways those innumerable people set about transacting their business. Some are swaggering along, taking every man by the button, and looking as patronizing and consequential as possible,—others are sneaking about as if they had picked a pocket, or intended doing so,—some look so sharp and acute, that I would feel sure of being overreached by them, if they so much as exchanged civilities with me,—one or two look as if they could cheat another, if he only tossed up with him for sixpence, and others seem perfect images of dulness and stupidity, remaining as still as if they had been turned into lamp posts.

I expected to have passed through miles of sheep on the road to Inverness, and to have encountered myriads in the town; but not at all! every free and independent flock sends a representative in the shape of the drover, who attends to the interests of his constituents, and sells them for what he can get. Several of these Highland shepherds are very "primitive formations," and one I observed, from our own county, so large and athletic, he might have brought, without much difficulty, a sheep in each pocket. This very respectable man, John Paterson, who is a well-known character in the north, began the world as a herd-boy on my father's property, and when he drove our flocks from the Highlands formerly to market, always managed to billet them every night on the fields of our friends or relatives. Proprietors were occasionally thunderstruck in a morning to behold a shower of sheep scattered over their meadows, apparently quite at home, while worthy John Paterson thought it a perfectly sufficient apology to say they were "Sir John's!" He has repeatedly been heard to mention, that his own for-

tune originally amounted only to 3s. 6d., but now, by honest industry and skilful management, it has multiplied into L.25,000 !

Several other instances were pointed out to me, in which the rearing of sheep had become an equally successful speculation, and formerly, my father used to tell me, that about the year 1790, he had declined an offer from Mrs. Mackay, the proprietor of Bighouse, who wished him to give her an annuity for life of L.300 a-year, and to take her estate in exchange, which was sold not many years afterwards for L.50,000, owing to the success of the British Wool Society, which he originated and established. The value of Highland property was thus so greatly enhanced, that the estate of Reay, which previously produced only L.1500 a-year, was purchased by the late Duke of Sutherland for L.450,000 !

Sheep have their merits, and they now certainly fulfil the prophecy of old Thomas the Rhymer six hundred years ago, that " the teeth of the sheep shall lay the plough on the shelf." A whole flock must have changed their names to mutton for the dinner to-day, as two hundred hungry gentlemen drew in their chairs at six,

with Mr. Donald Horne to preside, one of the most popular and convivial presidents for such occasions in the north, and he filled the chair, or perhaps I should rather say, the woolsack, with great eclat, till a late hour.

It often amuses me to calculate the many years of preparation which all necessarily combine to produce the grand result of a perfectly well-ordered dinner party. In the first place, the very servants who wait at table require a long apprenticeship of drilling and practice, before they acquire the sort of *legerdemain* and discipline, absolutely essential on their part,—then the cook must have been initiated in the deepest mysteries of his art, and the very guests have been taught from infancy, not to eat with their knives, and how to conduct a conversation in which there must neither be ignorance, pedantry, flippancy, or dulness. The four quarters of the globe also send contributions to the entertainment, and the wines perform at least one voyage to India before Messrs. Cathcart and Fergusson think them fit to be issued from their cellars at Leith.

We hear much discussion now, respecting a

railway through the vale of Strathmore to Aberdeen, so the forests may be trembling on their native hills, as a few strokes of the axe will soon degrade them into sleepers for the railroads. The Duke of Sutherland is said to have gained more than L.100,000 by taking a tenth share in the railway between Birmingham and Liverpool, which cost five millions; but where will money be found sufficient to bore tunnels through the great mountains of Aberdeenshire, or to raise viaducts between them?

We now proceeded on our journey eastwards, passing Castle Stewart, a tall, narrow, square house, built by the Regent Moray, and still most comfortably habitable, having descended by inheritance to the Earl of Moray, who is proprietor of so many fine places, he must be at a loss sometimes to remember all their names. A group of thriving old cherry-trees flourishes near the castle, transplanted from Kent 150 years ago by Alexander Earl of Moray. Buchanan mentions, in writing of the "Good Regent," that "his house was like a holy temple. After meals "he caused a chapter of the Bible to be read, and "asked the opinions of such learned men as were

" present upon it, not out of vain curiosity, but " from a desire to learn, and reduce to practice " what it contained." The fruits of such a life were exhibited in the truly Christian spirit of forgiveness with which he met his death, on the tragical day of his murder at Linlithgow.

When changing horses at the neat little city of Nairne, I saw, near the inn, that singularly unfortunate being, James Mitchell, now forty-five years old, the son of a clergyman, respecting whom Professor Dugald Stewart read an interesting paper once before the Royal Society. He is quite an anomaly in nature, being born without the faculties of speech, sight, or hearing, yet displaying some glimmering intelligence of countenance and conduct. His existence must be a dreary blank, a living death, without ever having enjoyed any of the sights or sounds of life, and scarcely having known any of its affections. The most persevering and generous kindness has been shown him by an amiable sister, who invented several ingenious devices for communicating what she wishes, by the touch of her fingers, and she has deservedly obtained considerable influence

over his naturally passionate and wilful disposition. To her he is docile and obedient, but all his actions being regulated by mere impulse, no idea of duty or principle can be conveyed to his mind, his intellect, if he has any, being buried in impenetrable darkness. How strange it would be, to know what are the thoughts and feelings of such a being! He is said to have an almost preternatural acuteness of touch and smell, and his greatest delight seems to be derived from handling carriages when they stop near the inn, trying the elasticity of their springs, and stroking the horses with great caution. He touches and feels whatever is near him, and seems gifted with astonishing curiosity, as well as some invention, one instance of which is, that when he wishes to ride, he places his hand under his foot like a stirrup. He kneels during family prayer, and when his father died, having been led forward to touch the corpse, he shrunk back with obvious horror, which may lead us to suppose that he has some instinctive apprehension of death. From that hour he never would sleep in the bed where his father's body had been laid, but some time af-

terwards, he took a stranger into that apartment, and laid his own head back on the pillow for a moment, having done which, he hurried his companion towards the churchyard, and patted his father's grave with his hand. How gratefully we should enjoy, and carefully improve the faculties given to ourselves, when we contrast the blessings they bring us, with the mournful state of this poor outcast, consigned to perpetual darkness, solitude, and silence. We are often apt to think the blind more cheerful than the deaf, not considering that those who have lost their sight can only be amused in society, and are then seen at their best, while those who are deprived of hearing, may forget their affliction over a book, but are reminded of it perpetually in company. Did you ever hear of the Irish clergyman who preached for the Blind Asylum formerly, and began by gravely remarking, "If all the world were blind, what a melancholy sight it would be!"

After passing through Nairn, we crossed "the witches' moor!" where Macbeth had his interview with the withered old hags. Their

dancing days are over now, and besides, we were rather too early for their cantrips, or for being favoured with any predictions of coming greatness to ourselves. No grass ever grows where a witch's foot has trod, and this "blasted heath" seems bare enough to prove for certain, that on the very identical spot we saw they appeared, and on no other. We carefully kept our gravity here, as you are probably aware, that if any one smiles on a witch in the Highlands, his mouth remains awry for ever afterwards.

In discussing, for the hundred-thousandth time, the marvellous genius of Shakespeare and other imaginative writers, I could not but lament that many sensible persons consider it essential now, in educating children, to exclude entirely all works of fancy, even when written for sacred purposes, adhering rigidly to matters of fact, and preserving the body without the spirit of thought. All depends, no doubt, on the use made of that powerful faculty, which may be degraded to vicious purposes or exalted to the highest, and it was well observed, that as the swan sings before it dies, it would have been well if

some poets had died before they sung, but still, the abuse of a gift in some instances or in many, does not warrant its utter extinction, and there are uses for the imagination, important, not only to our interests in time, but in eternity. The muse of poetry has been degraded often to the vilest purposes, and is yet so consecrated by Milton, Cowper, Montgomery, and others, that I could not but compare the contrast thus afforded, to the vulture's wing soaring as high as that of the eagle, but while the one shuns the brightness of meridian day, and keeps his grovelling eye on earthly objects, the other scans the very heavens and fixes his unflinching gaze on the dazzling orb of light. Religion itself is directed more to the imagination than to the senses, and I have often thought, in attending the last sufferings of a Christian's death-bed, how glorious is the triumph of that which is unseen, over that which is endured, when all the agonies of dissolution are superseded and nearly forgotten, amidst the faith and hope with which an unseen eternity has been joyfully anticipated, and in the vivid conception of that blessedness which " eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nei-

ther hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive."

We admired beyond expression the pine-covered hills, like those of Norway, and the five miles of forest around Darnaway Castle, where the richly wooded grounds exhibit trees enough to make a railroad round the world. I never now see a plantation without thinking of the saw-mill, and it is a melancholy connection of ideas, like Xerxes weeping over his followers, because in fifty years they could exist no longer.

The park round Brodie Castle is charmingly wooded. One half of the house is old, like the family pedigree, and an elegant new front-breadth has been added, giving all the light and comfort which very ancient houses so seldom afford. I recognized Burn's touch at once, for architects, like painters, have a style not to be mistaken. The recent appendix is rapidly assuming an appearance of antiquity, and dressing itself up in festoons of ivy, which will cause it to harmonize admirably with the rest, so that, before many years, they will appear a very suitable match.

The ceiling of one beautiful old room here is adorned by the richest dark oak carving in Scot-

land. It would make the fortune of a dozen sideboards and cabinets, being sculptured with the minuteness of seal-engraving, and there are eagles, cupids, unicorns, flowers, and fruit, all in full relief, the whole effect being so handsome, that I am scarcely surprised the fashion of ornamented roofs has been restored, and that people expend more on their cornices than on their carpets.

The family portraits here possess an additional interest to us, representing ancestors from whom we ourselves are descended, but the first of my progenitors to whom I was introduced, Emilia Brodie, made so extraordinary a grimace at me, that I shall never forget it. The painter had evidently intended a bewitching smile, and hazarded a distortion of features, such as might probably be the effect of eating the sourest of all lemons. In another apartment appeared the beautiful portrait of a young girl about sixteen, with whom I hastened to claim kindred, when A——, in a most provokingly matter-of-fact manner, investigated the case, and discovered that it was a plain elder sister who married into our family.

A very animated, but by no means beautiful, Flora Macdonald was there, looking like a clever schoolmistress, but not by any means realizing my previous conception of that celebrated heroine. Here also we admired the twentieth original of Charles the First, by Vandyke, which I have seen, and the monarch must certainly have sat *vis à vis* to the artist all his life, to produce so interminable a succession of portraits,—generally representing Charles the First with his head on, and riding a melancholy grey horse. It was a strange circumstance, recorded by Lord Southampton, that the night after his Majesty's execution, having been permitted to watch beside the body, he heard at midnight the heavy tread of some one coming up stairs, the door then slowly opened, and a man, muffled in his cloak and concealing his face, but strongly resembling Oliver Cromwell in air and voice, approached the bier, gazed at it for some time, shook his head, sighed, and withdrew, saying, in a melancholy tone, "cruel necessity!" How extraordinary was the combination of enthusiasm and hypocrisy in the Protector's character, "Forc'd, though it grieved his soul, to reign alone!"

Our connoisseurships thought very highly of one fine picture by Murillo, representing, as usual, a boy laughing, so extremely natural that you would have listened to hear the burst that seems coming. Some children were frightened one day while looking at it, and said, "that man is always laughing at us!" How very early in life, the terror of being laughed at commences, and, like most other instincts of nature, though useful in moderation, it becomes pernicious in excess.

Rembrandt was the greatest admirer of wrinkled old women who ever held a brush, but in one of his pictures here, he condescended to paint a young man not yet in the vale of years, and another exception to general rule was a portrait actually unfaded, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, of a beautiful lady and child.

In the spacious dining-room at Brodie Castle, modern portraits and landscapes are hung promiscuously, like a morsel of Somerset House arrived in the Highlands, and the subject of one picture in the entrance-hall, was what no other artist before or since appears ever to have thought of selecting. You remember the story

of King John ordering a Jew's teeth to be all successively drawn, till he confessed where his treasures were concealed, and here he is, in the very act of endurance, represented so naturally that I almost heard him scream. If Hutchins or Nasmyth had been the operators, he might have kept his secret for ever, as patients have declared they scarcely knew when the deed was done, while some even protest it is almost a pleasure, but this painting commemorated tooth-drawing in the old school, and seemed so horribly true to life, I should soon have felt a toothache with looking at it.

I have often wondered how it happens that dentists are almost invariably great encouragers of sculpture and painting? We lately heard, that when Cartwright, who makes one of the largest professional fortunes in London, bespoke a picture by Landseer, he enclosed him in payment a blank order on the Bank of England, to be filled up *à discretion!* and the wife of a celebrated dentist, some time since, out-bid every competitor, for some beautiful work of art, which was long and keenly contested, but I could not help laughing when told, that in the triumph

of success, she exclaimed, "It will be of great use to divert our patients in the operation room!" I scarcely think even Hogarth could succeed there; but this representation of the Jew would serve as very appropriate scenery and decoration for such a torture chamber.

"How far is't call'd to Forres?" Shakespeare, hem! The town of Forres may be recognized at any distance, or in any picture, by the round, hedge-hog-shaped hill of Clunie, which raises its dark well-covered head immediately behind the streets, surmounted by another of the many ugly monuments by which Nelson's memory has been commemorated. I wish people had more taste! We toiled up twice in one day to admire a splendid view from the summit of this eminence, and, when the sun was setting in brilliant style, A—— had the barbarity to propose a third expedition, but there are limits to what a rational being can undertake, and I sighed over the hill instead of ascending it.

Not quite half a mile from Forres, stands probably the most ancient piece of history in Great Britain. To commemorate the final retreat from Scotland of the Danish king Sueno,

a dark gray stone was erected, measuring about twenty feet perpendicularly above ground, and supposed to penetrate almost equally far underneath. The whole shaft is in one unbroken piece, and must have travelled from some unknown distance, as no such stone can be found in all that neighbourhood. On the surface is carved a hieroglyphic representation of the whole Danish army, some on foot and others on horseback, some with heads, and others without, the drawing and execution being nearly equal to what may be seen on cakes of gingerbread at a fair. The material is so very hard a granite, that those who executed the devices must have possessed strong hands and good chisels. Few works of man have remained so long unchanged on this earth, where "monuments themselves memorials need," while the frail beings who raised it, could scarcely have anticipated how many ages would roll over their forgotten graves, while this only record should remain of their ever having existed at all.

Being much interested in this very ancient relic, I hurried to the landlady at Forres, with a multitude of questions about her venerable

neighbour, but she civilly replied, with a look of indifference, "I've often he'erd tell of that auld stane, but I never saw it!" A—— wished her to start off instantly, as the evening was fine, that not another day might be added to the many she had already lost, but we could not light up a single spark of interest or enthusiasm! A dish of whipped cream would have excited her curiosity ten times more ardently, and the hoary pillar of Forres may stand there as long as it has stood already, before she moves a yard to behold it! Our hostess would make an exemplary quaker, as one of their superstitions is never to go sight-seeing, probably thinking, that after female curiosity having done so much harm originally, it should always now be kept in check. I once asked a quaker lady, recently returned from Orkney, what she thought of the fine cathedral at Kirkwall, when she replied, with a cold reproving look, "I believe we passed it!" The quakers have a rule also against dressed dishes, and their whole dinners consist of plain joints, apparently on the plan of your friend who always ordered an additional chicken for every additional visitor, till at last sixteen hungry guests

sat down to sixteen roasted fowls; but this would not have suited our good landlady, who is by no means of the Mary Stedman school, but was quite a "professed cook." She had acted the part of Mrs. Couch or Pouch for many years at Brodie Castle, and sent us up for dinner a complete page of Mrs. Glass, or Meg Dodds, copied to the very life.

Sanquhar House, near Forres, the property of Mr. Fraser Tytler, is very charmingly situated, commanding a fine view of nearly a whole county, and of a rich landscape, reaching even to the Caithness hills. The house itself is rather too much in the gable-end school of architecture to suit my fancy, but it may perhaps please other people. A former proprietor of this estate became bankrupt, sold the estate, and, in his old age, wandered as a beggar to that very door where once he had been proprietor! Many would rather have starved.

We remained all Sunday at Forres, and next morning hired horses for the day, to see how much of this neighbourhood they could contrive to show us. You may remember the old lady who used to say that "if she killed a pair of

post-horses with fatigue one day, they came alive the next morning," and really ours achieved wonders yesterday, though I forgot to ask whether to-day they had been rescuscitated or not.

When we were about to proceed, under a brilliant sunshine, towards Darnaway Castle, notice was brought, that during the late hurricane, so many trees had been blown down across the new approach, the road was impassable. This threatened a complete discomfiture, but fortunately we were driven by an old experienced post-boy—drivers remain always boys—who had plied backwards and forwards here during thirty years. He took us towards a gate, flanked by a large arbitrary ticket, forbidding all access for carriages in that direction, but he pointed at it contemptuously with the end of his whip, saying, in a triumphant tone, "We'll get through for a' that!" Accordingly our daring wheels rolled on uninterruptedly, and the very difficulties added to my enjoyment on finally succeeding. The park scenery is here magnificent—such immeasurable extent, and such an unbounded profusion of trees, though none are of very pre-eminent size, and is framed in by a

great fir forest, by the ocean, and by the distant mountains of Sutherland and Caithness.

Lord Moray's family motto is a key to all religion, "Salvation through Christ the Redeemer;" and it is a remarkable circumstance, that the late earl had his coffin prepared, and constantly kept in his bed-room, during many years previous to his death, which must certainly have acted as a perpetual admonition, though one of the greatest mysteries in our nature is, the impossibility, almost, of realizing that we are ourselves to die, even though we make it our daily duty to reflect on it and to be ready. It seems easily said, and frequently talked of, that death is inevitable, but to feel the actual consciousness that this busy world shall go on as busily for ages after we are buried, as it did for the ages before we were born—that our bodies shall be imprisoned for centuries, perhaps, in dark and dreary separation from the soul, and that our spirits, in the meantime, shall awake to instant consciousness, amidst a scene unutterably wonderful, where we must for ever and ever exist—all this bursts upon our thoughts occasionally, with that awe and astonishment which it is fitted

to create, but amidst the varied occupations of life, how often it seems as new and surprising in all its solemn reality, as if we had never before imagined that death could be to us individually, as real as it has been to others, and that we are hurrying along on the irresistible tide which shall plunge us into eternity.

Darnaway Castle is about thirty years of age, and no great beauty in external aspect. Though built of the very finest freestone, in a situation exceedingly magnificent, yet taking it as a house, this large pile of building is more handsome than beautiful. The front is Grecian, the ornaments over the windows Gothic, and the turrets are like eau-de-Cologne bottles. The point of chief interest at Darnaway Castle is Randolph's Hall, built by the celebrated nephew of Robert Bruce, a fine baronial apartment five centuries old, in magnificent proportion, being more than a hundred feet long. It is canopied thirty feet high by an arched roof of oak, like that of Westminster Hall, perfectly blackened by time, and it is floored with stone flags. The internal appearance resembles that of a fine old parish church without pews, and the only seats consist

of some very antique benches, with richly carved sides, and various extraordinary oak chairs, all of different shapes, and carved in a variety of whimsical patterns. These seats were assuredly used before the word "comfort" had been invented. If such chairs were still in universal fashion, fewer country gentlemen would become sleepy and apopletic after dinner, as, instead of spring cushions, the very seats are elaborately carved, and looked by no means inviting to sit upon.

Lord Randolph's table is also in a very unsophisticated style, being nearly as it came originally from the neighbouring forest, and everything within this primitive old hall is formed of these two materials, wood and stone. Most unfortunately the architect who spoiled the new house, thought it necessary to spoil the old one also, and he has exhibited his taste by modernizing the windows into something very like those of a dissenting chapel, and, dreadful to relate, the grand sweep of an arch, which once formed the chimney, and where a carriage might almost have been turned round, is now lowered and narrowed, so that an ox would find some diffi-

culty in being roasted whole there. Very few architects are fit to be trusted in an ancient house, for the new parts too often say no to the antiquity of the old. A painter might as well have attempted to touch up a Raphael, as a modern builder to improve Randolph's Hall, but builders all run mad whenever they get into an old house, and either knock down, mutilate, or disfigure it.

The ancestors at Darnaway Castle have a more aristocratic air than in most other places, all having sat, apparently, to the best artists, in the full dress trappings of their rank and station, stars, ribbons, robes, and garters, looking "every inch a peer." Some of the ladies wore large elaborate ruffs, so white and stiff, you might have fancied their heads were placed on silver salvers, and one collar, in particular, we noticed, which a modern milliner might have despaired of imitating, while the lady's face who wore it, had faded so much, that she seemed sitting in a fainting fit.

The most curious portrait of all was Queen Mary, disguised, by way of a frolic, in boy's clothes! She wore long scarlet stockings, black

velvet coat, black kilt, white sleeves, and such a ruff! Her Majesty was looking as grave and serious upon this extraordinary piece of jocularity, as if she had been receiving the reproof she merited from John Knox.

We ended our inspection of Darnaway Castle as usual on the roof, which displays a perfect map of Scotland, from the best authorities. I dare not guess how many counties we saw at once, including fifty miles of hilly coast, a world of wood extending twenty miles, the sea, and a circle of snow-speckled mountains. On an eminence like this, we ought to borrow the eyes of an eagle.

A very celebrated and beautiful heronry belongs to Lord Moray near this, on the Findhorn, and when I stood upon the towering pinnacles, two hundred feet high, from which the birds may be watched to most advantage, the river, rocks, and wood, seemed an exact counterpart of Wyndcliff on the Wye, quite magnificently romantic. A—— shouted and clapped his hands, after which more than a hundred herons took wing, and soared through the air at so slow and dignified a rate, that they might easily have been

shot, though herons are so tenacious of life, that they have generally to be fired at twice, or even oftener. After being wounded, these birds are very unsafe to deal with, because they fly at a sportsman with fury, endeavouring to peck out his eyes, and their strength is considerable, as a heron can carry with ease to his nest, a fish, weighing upwards of a pound. Each nest seemed almost large enough to hold a moderate sized man, and I counted above twenty nests in one elm, which must be apt to break down the branches, some of which are so festooned with them, that you might fancy a fishing-net had been suspended over all the trees. The whole colony interested me extremely, and I felt quite sorry when A—— came up at last, like one of the London police, desiring me to "move on."

Our next step was through a scene of almost unearthly beauty, to Altyre, the most lovely and loveable place you can conceive, belonging to Sir William Cumming Gordon, chief of the clan Cumming, and representative of the old Lords of Badenoch. The house is a perfect cluster of arbours and green-houses, apparently meant for the muses and graces, for pleasure,

gayety, and romance, but never intended for the mere vulgar, ordinary purposes of life. Within, without, and around, you see nothing but flowers rushing in at every window, and besetting all the doors. This is the court of Flora herself, and you would suppose we had come for a horticultural show!

The approach commences through a dark firwood, springing up amidst purple heath; and gradually as we advanced, the grounds became enriched with evergreens, varied by forest trees, and bordered with turf round the house. The green lawn is like Genoa velvet, studded with fuschias, geraniums, carnations, every flower, in short, that has a name, overshadowed by graceful walnut trees, and the entrance hall emits the fragrance and atmosphere of a conservatory. Your friend, who said she could not sleep for three nights after seeing a better garden than her own, would never have closed an eye had she visited at Altyre. What do the quakers think of Nature for dressing in such gaudy colours? But, as Dr. Johnson says, "a man who is unfit for a better world in a blue coat, is not very likely to go there in a gray." It is a

perpetual miracle certainly, to see the dark, dingy earth, hourly producing those brilliant and fragrant blossoms with which such a scene is decorated, like our own barren minds, in which there is no good by nature, and which require the seed to be sown in them, and the sunshine of heaven to nourish those flowers of excellence, and those fruits of holiness, which can alone render them lovely or attractive.

In the garden of Eden, probably, the flowers never would have faded, but they suffer the penalty, like all creation, of our frailty and guilt. It is very remarkable, that no flower is perfectly black! they are the toys and gems of nature, given as an innocent recreation, suited to every age and every rank, equally calculated for our seasons of joy or of sorrow—of sickness or of health. Though the moral lesson that they teach, speaks of short-lived prosperity, decay, and death, for truly "the loveliest things on earth are those that soonest fade away;" yet these touching recollections are brought to mind under an aspect of beauty and cheerfulness, calculated to testify with how much bounty and goodness the pleasures of life are

sent to alleviate its sorrows. Those who find the thorns of life unembellished by its flowers, may generally blame themselves for seeking in the artificial dissipations of the world, what can be found only in those natural enjoyments provided for us by our wise and beneficent Creator.

Moral writers have often remarked, that the gay and transient flowers are scattered on the world's surface, while the more precious and durable metals must be laboriously dug for; but while the deepest mines should be explored, the lovely blossoms need not be neglected, and I never enjoy a flower-garden like this, without feeling convinced it affords one of the few amusements of which it would be impossible to tire. The bee sipping its draught in every flower, scarcely obeys the instinct of nature more naturally than we do when inhaling their fragrance, and admiring their lovely forms; and the Bible repeatedly directs our devout attention to flowers. How truly may we say, when contemplating a richly decorated garden, "Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these."

> " How happily, how happily the flowers die away!
> Oh! could we but return to earth as easily as they;
> Just live a life of sunshine, of innocence, and bloom,
> Then drop without decrepitude or pain into the tomb."

This busy day seemed a fortnight long, we said, did, and saw so much. I pity everybody who has not seen Altyre, and was shocked to hear that a situation has been fixed on for a new house; but if the old one be deserted, the Queen of the Fairies will certainly take possession, as it seems already fitted up on purpose for her summer residence.

We dined with the Miss Cummings at Moy House, where the old garden enchanted me, being ornamented with the finest "*gean*," alias wild cherry, trees in Scotland, which had attained the size of respectable forest trees, and were bending beneath the weight of their fruit; and here, during last summer, by no means commendable for being either warm or dry, peaches ripened in abundance on the open, unflued wall! The gardener at Moy gained a prize this season for that curious plant, the Hoya Carnosa, the large clustering flowers of

which resemble a ready made honeycomb, with a drop of honey hanging from each petal, the whole being modelled in a substance so exactly resembling wax, that you might almost make it into candles. The bees would give over working if they saw this flower, and no plant was ever more easily propagated, seeing that a single green leaf, carelessly stuck in the ground, will take root, and become fit for a horticultural show before the following year.

Moy House belonged, in the previous generation, to an old humourist, who became so indignant at his next heir, Mr. Grant, then of Red Castle, for calling on him one day, in a carriage and four, that he altered his will, bequeathing his property to a perfectly different Mr. Grant, who was probably satisfied with a chaise and pair. We heard of a more prudent and successful heir presumptive elsewhere, who always left his equipage at the neighbouring inn, put on a shabby coat, and walked, stick in hand, to the house, a plan much to be recommended where an eccentric old gentleman is in question. Wills and marriages are both generally so very

whimsical and unaccountable, that I have ceased to wonder at either; and if ever wealthy old people are to exhibit caprice and bad feeling, it seems chiefly reserved for the last will. There must be a great degree of infidelity in those who leave behind them a testament which they would be ashamed while alive, that the world should see, not apparently reflecting, that when this posthumous deed is read, the testator shall be already in the presence of a Holy God, who condemns every angry feeling, and who will make us responsible for the conscientious disposal of all we have, and all we leave behind.

A gentleman who had been whistling by the fireside for an hour one day, beside a numerous circle of visitors, at last exclaimed, as if bringing forth the result of his meditations, "I wonder no body ever left me any money!" This is a subject of wonder often, I dare say, to others who say less about it, but, like all earthly pleasures, even a legacy has its drawbacks, as it implies the loss of a friend whose attachment was far more precious, and, therefore, even for the most mercenary this is the last way in which one

could desire to grow rich. When a lady remarked once, what a pleasure it would be, succeeding unexpectedly to some rich relation whom you did not care for, another very coolly replied, "Or to one you do care for! it would be all one in a month! look at the sons and brothers who inherit estates!" It certainly would be curious if, by magical agency, the hue of people's dress could become in exact accordance with the hue of their spirits! Then it would be seen that those who seem gay, cheerful, and reckless, are frequently suffering under the darkest despondency, while in the case of successions it would often become obvious that there had been more bombazine and crape than real sorrow; but I wish the old proprietor of Moy had seen us arrive in our humble chaise, and bequeathed me this smiling place, so well-wooded, so highly cultivated, and altogether so enjoyable. Perhaps what contributed most of all to make me like this house might be, the pleasant circle within doors, which would make any residence delightful; but the curtain has dropped over it, and the sunshine of that evening must live only in my memory, where it will always remain as a pleasing remem-

brance. The motto of our family. "J'aime le mellieur," is certainly my case in respect to the society we meet, and we have hitherto been very fortunate. A coachmaker once, by mistake, altered, most distressingly, the meaning of these words on our shield, by substituting an inscription with which our carriage drove about for several years, but I believe the poor man did not really mean any jest when he painted it "Jamais le mellieur!"

I remain,

For self and partner,

Yours.

MORAYSHIRE.

The braes ascend like lofty wa's,
The foamin' stream deep roaring fa's
O'erhung wi' fragrant spreading shaws.
BURNS.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—As there are said to be fifteen days more of summer in Morayshire, than in any other part of Scotland, we seem to have obtained a lease of them all at once! The weather has been most enchanting lately, and is altogether doing the civil thing by us, being exactly such as we require for perfect happiness. I remember the time, when you and I used to wish the weather of the whole world might be regulated so as to suit our one solitary geranium in a flower-pot; and how apt I am still to think, if the fields be burned as dry and brown as a

slice of toast, that it matters little, provided my own bonnet escape a shower, though, I daresay, the farmers would vote me a new one, rather than do without rain another day. It is lucky we are not allowed a voice on the subject, for even sunshine itself might be indulged in to excess.

We have this day enjoyed, at Reluglas, the highest perfection of glen scenery, quite an exaggeration of Roslin, formerly belonging to one of our leading Whig orators, and the author of several very popular works, Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, but recently purchased by Mr. M'Killigan, a native of this neighbourhood. We were told, that from his earliest years, he had almost hopelessly desired to possess this exquisite place, and after realizing an adequate sum, during one successful voyage to China, by a happy coincidence he returned at the very time it was sold, and realized his juvenile castle in the air. Who would not go to China to-morrow for so delightful a result? It is seldom men gain so precisely the point they aim at, and I hope the new proprietor may long continue to enjoy it as he does now, and to embellish the place as tastefully as he has begun.

The grounds are covered with a perfect eruption of roses, besides being studded over with rare plants of great value, and of most uncommon aspect, imported by Mr. M'Killigan himself. The Horticultural Society of London, when vainly trying to naturalize the beautiful variegated azalia, of which we saw several plants quite at home here, expended no less than L.300, while Mr. Wright, a nurseryman, paid L.100 for one specimen, and has since realized L.1000 by propagating and selling it.

The interior of this house is beautifully fitted up with English comfort and Asiatic decorations, but the collection of corals alone might occupy agreeably more hours than we could spend on the entire place. They resemble the minutest carvings in ivory, some representing a little forest of plants, while others were little circular worlds, formed by a combination among myriads of living atoms, which thus raise habitations for themselves, and increase their number, till at last they gradually expand to such a bulk, that they become islands large enough for man himself to exist on! What will not perseverance do! One coral island, examined by Captain Beechy, was

thirty miles in diameter, and many of the South Sea islands began their existence in the world on a scale not larger than those masses of coral which we weighed in our hands. What a lesson this might be on the importance of little things ! drops make the ocean, moments make the year, and trifles life.

At Reluglas, the small remains of an ancient vitrified fort, served as a treat to antiquaries formerly, but the gardener once, in a fit of ingenuity, thought he could improve this old relic by building a massy wall round the spot, over which he scattered a top-dressing of the vitrified material, looking like fragments of broken bottles, and now the whole is metamorphosed into a perfect deformity.

Travellers who merely skirt along the high-roads of Scotland, can form no conception how much they miss by not tracing up such glens as those of the Findhorn and Divie, bounded by banks, hills, forests, and heath-covered mountains, without one barren spot to disfigure the landscape. The whole scene is enlivened too, by places which are the very romance of Highland residences, every one fit to form the frontispiece

to any poem you ever read. We might imagine the house of Reluglas had wandered over from Switzerland, with its overhanging roof, like a slouched hat, and its deep casements, trimmed with flowers, while the elegant mansion of Dunphail, built on a plan by Playfair, seems inside and out as if it were imported ready-made from Italy. Do you remember our being diverted once at a lady who had spent a summer at Naples, and came home, completely Italianized, saying to you at dinner, soon afterwards, in a tone of disgust, "Fancy me with my Italian appetite, set down to roast beef!" But here she might have lived in happy contentment, surrounded by books, pictures, ornaments, everything,—even the very sky, Italian.

Nothing is more surprising, in these glens, than to observe the clever way in which trees contrive to root themselves on stones, when they have literally nothing but the rifted rocks to hold by, and to live upon. The fibres are at first no larger than bits of thread, penetrating every crevice, and gradually enlarging into cables, till at length they become strong enough to elbow the very rocks from their stations.

Many large blocks of stone have thus been precipitated downwards, while the trees, clasping and riveting their arms around the remaining rocks, look down into the abyss beneath, and cling to their places with the tenacity of a statesman.

The grounds at Dunphail are of a softer and more English character than those of Reluglas; the verdant hills, opening with a graceful sweep on each side, and charmingly varied by a crowd of distant foliage, while near the house we admired groups of prodigious forest trees, as round and graceful as ostrich feathers. When the wind blew over their lofty tops, and bent them towards the earth, I could not but think, how apt an emblem they exhibit of our own minds, so easily agitated, so soon almost prostrated by the sweeping blast of sorrow or misfortune, yet so speedily restored again to that comparative rest and peace which are habitual to those who can rightly apply that sacred text, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

The river here is truly enchanting, and we saw from the house of Dunphail, a beautifully situated ruinous castle, surrounded by a deep ravine, to which belongs a fine old tradition, worth its weight in gold. The story has been potted and preserved so long, that you must try a taste of it now; and I liked beyond measure thus to read the book of history, in folio, by standing on the very spot where all its events actually occurred, and almost beholding the very individuals living, acting, and dying, as they did many centuries ago. I often think, what an extraordinary picture gallery it would make, if a representation were supernaturally to appear on the silent walls of every old building, shewing the strange scenes they have witnessed since the hour of their being built. The very rooms we ourselves daily inhabit, could testify of joys and sorrows, now for ever forgotten, which once agitated the hearts of many lying at rest in the tomb; and those walls which have echoed the laughter or the grief of those who are no more, and of those who yet survive, will hereafter be the property of unborn genera-

tions, to whom our existence will be a tale of old times.

These thoughts on our own unconsciousness of what once passed within the walls around us, were particularly impressed upon me some years ago, when we heard that a family who had hired a country residence near Edinburgh, where they enjoyed many cheerful hours round the fireside, having occasion once to lift the drawing-room hearth-stone, were startled and shocked to find, immediately underneath, the ghastly spectacle of a skeleton in chains! This house had belonged to Chesely of Dalry, who was hanged for assassinating Lockhart of Carnwath, the president of the Court of Session, and the criminal's own family having stolen the body off the gallows, had privately buried it there. So frightful a spectacle was like some apparition from another world; but nothing so terrifying appeared in the old castle of Dunphail, formerly the scene of many bold and daring actions.

The Cummings were among the greatest and bravest of all the Highland clans; and King Robert Bruce, who wished to exterminate them,

created Randolph, his own nephew, Earl of Moray, and being in a generous mood, granted him this estate. Old Cumming of Dunphail, not seeing the eligibility of that arrangement, resisted the transfer, and sustained a long siege within this castle. Meantime his son, Alister Bane, a young man of extraordinary enterprise and courage, preserved the famishing garrison alive, by seizing opportunities occasionally to throw in sacks of oatmeal across a deep fissure in the rocks which we were shewn. The enemy vainly endeavoured to detect the place of his concealment, until they brought a bloodhound to the spot, which tracked him through the woods. Here we traced every step of the ravine ourselves, till we reached the fatal cave where he was overtaken, the entrance being no larger than that of a dog kennel, and there his enemies lighted a fire that he might be smoked to death. The young hero, seeing his fate inevitable, attempted to come forth, saying, "Let me out to die like a Cumming, sword in hand!" But Lord Randolph cruelly thrust him back, and replied, "No! die like a wolf as you are!"

The head of Alister Bane was cut off, and carried to a rock opposite, where old Cumming stood, expecting the arrival of his son with provisions, and there the enemy threw it at his feet, calling out, in an insulting tone, "Here's beef for your bannocks!" The wretched father recognised his son, and exclaimed, in an agony of rage and grief, "This is a bone to pick that you shall rue!" Discouraged, however, and subdued by so frightful a calamity, the old man struggled no longer, but yielded to his fate, and was put to death, with his forty faithful clansmen. Their heads were stuck up *in terrorem* at Elgin, and their mutilated bodies thrust into a cairn near the spot where they fell, which was shown ever afterwards as "the tomb of the headless Cummings." A few years since, the parish clergyman caused the skeletons to be dug up, and carefully buried in a distant church-yard, at the risk of destroying the evidence of this melancholy tale. Not a single skull was found on that occasion, and I am always glad when proof can be brought, that tradition really has spoken the truth, though I cannot but wish that the massacred clan had remonstrated as successfully

with their murderers, as the Baron of Leys, "My head is a thing I cannot well want."

It is curious, that after a lapse of five hundred years, this beautiful estate has again returned to the rightful clan, while the names of both contending parties are now united in the present proprietor, Mr. Cumming Bruce.

The same glen at Dunphail became afterwards celebrated as the refuge of a daring robber, whose well selected abode, in the cleft of the rock, we inspected; and this valley is now inhabited by a couple of white fairies, who glide gracefully about at night among the plantations, and the belief of their existence diffused around the neighbourhood is more effectual than either man-traps or spring-guns for keeping off poachers.

Strangers in this neighbourhood may be sometimes perplexed to hear how familiarly the inhabitants talk of what happened to themselves "before and after the flood!" not perhaps recollecting the extraordinary inundations in Morayshire eleven years ago, when houses, bridges, castles, villages, and inhabitants were all nearly swept from their foundations, and in-

volved in one common ruin. Many people wish to be envied for their good fortune, but if that be out of the question, then the next pleasure in life is to excite very great pity, and for that purpose a calamity like this ought to be made the most of. Sir Thomas Dick Lauder's volume did wonders, and really plunged me into a perfect cold bath when I read it; but he has got into considerable disgrace with one family, for having rather spitefully under-stated their losses, and though he nearly drowned them all, it is by no means considered satisfactory.

The scene at Dunphail on this occasion was described to me as being like a great shipwreck. The tumultuous Divie rushing like a wall of water down the glen, and sweeping away in its mad career bridges, mills, trees, cattle, and cottages, to the value of L.5000. The very house itself was besieged by the raging stream, and though its foundation is high and rocky, the inhabitants were advised to hasten out for safety, which they all did with the exception of a Highland dairy-maid, who insisted with great courage on remaining, because it is considered

" unlucky" to desert a house entirely. No persuasion could induce her to move, so she was forcibly ejected, and the proprietor himself remained alone, to garrison the walls and to watch over the fate of his beautiful residence. The water rose higher and higher, the night had closed in darkness, and the rock was crumbling fast away to within a few feet of the corner wall, when suddenly a distant bank broke down on an opposite side of the stream, the current was thus unexpectedly drained off, and the half-drowned house has now been restored by the Humane Society to all its former life and loveliness. At Ballindalloch, on the confluence of the Avon and Spey, Sir George Macpherson Grant found a carpet of gravel laid down in his dining-room, and Spey salmon actually swimming about alive in the kitchen! In one village all the inhabitants had to save themselves on rafts, and in many farms the soil and crops sailed away, like floating islands, to the ocean, which also received on that day a valuable and unexpected cargo of hay-ricks, sheep, chairs, eight-day clocks, tables, and every variety of household

furniture, moveables and fixtures. Nothing was half so remarkable in this extraordinary calamity, as the courageous activity with which the bold Highlanders met their misfortune, testifying a heroic degree of Christian resignation amidst unexpected ruin, and even in some affecting instances encountering death itself. One poor man risked his life to regain his spectacles, "because without them he could not read his Bible!" The brave old bridge of Balgownie, on the Don, five hundred years old, put all younger structures to shame, being almost the only one that withstood the shock. It was built by Bishop Elphinstone, and endowed with a benefaction of L.2 per annum, which has accumulated, under the trusty management of the good magistrates at Aberdeen, to no less a sum than L.8000. I wish they would take your affairs and mine in trust also! It is a curious Highland superstition, that friends or lovers who part on a bridge never meet again! If my letter were to stop on the bridge of Balgownie you would probably never hear from me more, so I must add one little appendix to this subject.

The former proprietor of Reluglas wishing very naturally to commemorate the wonderful height to which the Findhorn and Divie then rose, placed a stone at the proper place, with an inscription to testify that there the two streams actually met, but a mischievous traveller lately rooted up the stone and carried it to a perfectly incredible eminence, where it now stands gravely informing us that here is the level to which the water rose. I make a point of believing everything, but was certainly rather astonished how a living being had escaped! Since then, however, that difficulty has been solved on the best authority, and the stone turns out to be somewhat of the nature of a tomb-stone, which is apt to exaggerate.

People who journalize their travels generally become unsupportably dull, by attempting the sublime, but I have rather kept to the ridiculous on this occasion, though with a more ambitious pen the Morayshire floods could have been worked up to a perfect Niagara. Pray consider yourself as owing a visit to this neighbourhood until you have paid one, which will not be your

last or only descent on a county so truly interesting, with its proud-looking castles, its cottages of gentility, and all the triumphs of nature and of art, with which it is adorned. As the old song says, " I'll make you be fain to follow me !"

CASTLE GRANT.

There needs na' be sae great a phrase
Wi' droning dull Italian lays;
I wad na gi'e our ain strathspeys
For half a hundred score o' 'em.
BURNS.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—Your life seems as uniform at present as the pendulum of a clock, but from your description it must be nearly as useful. In fact, without meaning to be vain, I am like the minute handle making a complete circle, during the time you take to revolve an inch or two, though the chief interest of my movements arises from knowing that you are behind the scenes to partake of them.

We this day diverged twenty miles off our road, to inspect that strange old place, Castle Grant, belonging to the Earl of Seafield; a pro-

digious chieftain-like edifice, surrounded by grim-looking mountains, and grim-looking fir trees, and filled with grim-looking ancestors. Truly as "the dark building o'er the valley frown'd," it looked like the stronghold of some great free-booter, which you might feel terrified to approach after dark. Mrs. Radcliffe would have been quite at home here, and I could write a melo-drama myself on the spot; "*Enter Rudolpho, cautiously, with pistols—Hark!!*"——— now fancy the rest, one or two murders, an apparition, plenty of poison, and several executions.

We were hurrying along the high-road to take a glance at this ancient fossil of a castle, when a respectable looking old man stopped us, touched his bonnet with a soldier-like air, and said to A——, in a most deferential manner, "Would you be offended, Sir, if I were speaking to you?"

We both looked extremely encouraging, so he added in a still more earnest voice, "I have served in the four quarters of the globe, sir! at St. Helena, St. Jago, South America, Corunna, and the West Indies!"

My purse now began to quiver in my reticule, thinking of course this was a case of begging, and I even settled that it would be impossible to get off respectably under a shilling, when he added, "I was wishing to ask a small favour of you, sir! my cottage is only a step off. If you and the lady will come in to take a taste of whisky and a biscuit, that would be a great honour to the like of me. No offence, sir, but it is our way in the Highlands!"

We thanked him cordially, though I could not resist a gentle hint against what the Highlanders call "a spark of whisky," adding a short panegyric on teetotalism, but he said in reply, "It would be a disgrace to any Macintosh, Ma'am, who could not take a glass or two without being the worse." I suppose he was like the witness in court, who said he had never seen his friend the worse of drink, but often the better of it. You have heard of the M.P. who, some years ago, inadvertently astonished the House of Commons, by beginning his speech against the flogging of soldiers for intoxication, by saying, "Mr. Speaker! —— you get drunk, —— I get drunk, —— we all get drunk!"——

The cottage pointed out by our old soldier was very neat, but by no means so near as he hospitably wished us to think, therefore, with a civil apology, on account of being limited in our allowance of time, we politely suggested that he might accompany us along the approach to show the way, which he very obligingly did, and moreover pointed out some of the battle-fields and hills, which otherwise we should not have discovered. That of Cromdale interested us especially, where the cause of James II. received its final blow in Scotland, and the old soldier informed us, that there the bones had lately been dug up of "a person of respectability." How the deceased's respectability had been ascertained we did not hear.

A—— was so much pleased by the communicativeness and simplicity of our military volunteer, that when taking leave he offered him a handsome donation, but the old soldier drew back, and actually swore a solemn oath on the spot, that nothing could induce him to accept it, not being apparently of so persuadable a nature on this score as the pew-opener at your church, who is forbid to accept any douceur from stran-

gers, but always whispers when declining it, that they may place what they please under the seat, where she will find it next morning.

What prodigious entertainment travellers lose, who do not converse frankly and kindly with the country people! Our old cicerone seemed as fond of Castle Grant as if it had been his own, and said with a look of delighted anticipation, "You'll see some things to-day, Ma'am, that you little expect! The armoury is a grand place! you'll be surprised!!"

In the approach, we were stopped by a poor maniac, who fancies herself owner of this property, and walked with great dignity, holding up her draggled petticoats, and calling herself "Lady Watson!" After a short parley, she condescended to let us proceed; and I could not but think how fortunate it is, when madness is not of a melancholy kind, for this pitiable being enjoyed a sort of happiness nearly allied to that of persons who habitually build castles in the air, but while we are deeply responsible for any such voluntary waste of intellect, Lady Watson may continue blamelessly to enjoy her imaginary consequence, and to confer her imagi-

nary favours, unless it be true, as a French author once maintained, that men are answerable even for any sin they may fancy themselves committing in a dream.

An American would say, that we could not easily "ditto" Castle Grant! I have seldom seen a more striking *coup d'oeil* than this very stern-looking old place, though the ancient towers have been cruelly injured by a modern addition, like a cotton manufactory, the blame of which lies upon Adams. The venerable antique tower, rising 118 steps from the ground, looks down with solemn contempt on this vulgar excrescence, and seems heartily ashamed of the connection.

We laboriously ascended, to enjoy from our usual station on the roof, a grand wild view of the Grant country, Cairngorum studded with snow, the frowning heights of Ben Nevis, challenging the very clouds, and endless plantations of sombre fir trees, so close and thick, they seemed as if we might walk on their tops. I have a hearty respect for those primitive old forests which planted and raised themselves from nothing!

The furniture here, which I expected to find almost coeval with the forests, is, on the contrary, quite gay and modern; chairs which run so lightly along the floor, they might be entered for the St. Leger, and sofas in the very newest extreme of luxury and taste. The ancestors here are worth travelling any distance to visit. In this very long line, it is amusing to trace a family likeness among so many successive generations, all remarkably handsome, while we perceived a gradual modernizing of dress and attitude. None were so beautiful, however, as the young heiress of Rossdhu, Miss Colquhoun, painted by Ramsay, in a rich white satin dress, and carrying a wreath of flowers. She was forcibly carried off by a second son of this family, who proved, when on trial for the offence, that the lady sat in front on the horse, and must therefore have run off with him! This plea being considered satisfactory, the gentleman was acquitted, and became afterwards laird of Grant, on which his second son succeeded to the beautiful and extensive domain of Rossdhu on Loch Lomond. We saw here a miniature portrait including the three individuals who descended from that

marriage, Sir Ludovic Grant, Sir James Colquhoun, and Colonel Colquhoun, all dressed exceedingly fine, and looking very much bored, as if they were listening to some very prosing talker.

Here we beheld about the twentieth copy I have observed in Morayshire of the same painting. At Brodie, Gordon Castle, Dunphail, Altyre, Castle Grant, and probably every other house I did not visit, there is a picture of the Sybil, which, as you were once in this county, you must of course recollect, with a pen in her hand, a turban on her head, and her eyes turned up to the ceiling, exactly as we all do, when much at a loss for an idea.

The Seafield family attached themselves apparently, in a most amiable degree, to every person in the remotest manner connected with them, and here we saw five or six portraits, in full clerical costume, of the various clergymen they were accustomed to hear, the family piper full-length, and even the old hen-wife in a kit-kat! Nothing, however, in the way of painting, ever amused me so much, as the good humoured whim of an old Laird of Grant, who brought to the castle an artist named Waitt, and caused

about thirty portraits to be done, exhibiting the formidable likeness of each gentleman belonging to his clan. It was a fine, chieftain-like idea, and has been most comically executed! You never saw so fierce looking a collection! The Kings of Scotland at Holyrood are nothing to it!!

If any family of Grant wishes for an ancestor, he has only to come here and make a choice! A—— took down a memorandum of all their extraordinary designations, but I only remember Grant of Ballindalloch, and Grant of Tullochgorum, well known for the reel which goes by his name, and even now he looks quite ready to start from his frame, and set off to the piper opposite. In the centre of all, hangs the patriarch of the clan, exhibiting a most venerable aspect, and wearing a profusion of gray hair, like white cotton. Unluckily there are no Mrs. Grants! I should have liked beyond measure to see the ladies who matched such gentlemen! the power of painting could no farther go!

An old Laird of Grant formerly despatched one of his clan to the Earl of Findlater with a present of chickens and venison, but the High-

lander not being a good linguist, delivered his message in a most deferential manner as follows:—"The Laird o' Grant's compliments to "the Laird o' Fin-laater, and sends him sick-"ness and vengeance. If he wants more he "can have them!" The two neighbouring families of Findlater, or Fin-de-la-terre, and Grant, are now merged into one, under the more modern title of the Earl of Seafield.

Grantown is the most perfectly Highland village I have seen. Here the men all sport their clan tartans and kilts, while the young women wear a graceful plaid, and the snood in their hair, looking all neat, clean, and cheerful, "contented wi' little, and cantie wi' mair." Our old soldier spoke in raptures of the chief's family, saying, "they never wish to change tenants, and we never wish to change landlords." Undoubtedly it might surprise a stranger, seeing no great manufactories in the village, to observe, nevertheless, an appearance of almost unaccountable prosperity. The granite houses, so nearly similar in age and size, they seem all to have been built at once, the streets spacious, and everything denoting comfort and competence;

but when we heard how liberally and judiciously the very poorest tenants on this estate are attended to and watched over, my perplexity on this subject was ended, and I could wonder no longer, that the good old times are still extant here, of boundless attachment to the "reigning family."

We ought certainly now to have danced down the glen of Strathspey, for we proceeded through that charming valley, passing many fine seats in the Grant country, among which Ballindalloch, belonging to Sir George Macpherson Grant, is one of the most ancient and beautiful, finely situated, richly wooded, and exhibiting that air of indescribable cheerfulness and good order, which testifies the care of a resident proprietor.

Balveny Castle is a considerable ruin which belonged to a celebrated heiress, "The fair maid of Galloway," who succeeded the Earls of Douglas, and Dukes of Touraine, by the cruel slaughter of her two young brothers, whom the Chancellor Crichton, without pity for their youth, the eldest being only eighteen, or any scruple on account of having promised them protection, treacherously inveigled into Edinburgh Castle,

and beheaded. The young lady first bestowed herself and castle on the Earl of Douglas, her cousin, whom King James the Second stabbed in Stirling Castle, when he arrived there by invitation, bringing with him a safe conduct under the great seal. The disconsolate widow next married, by special dispensation, the brother and successor of her husband, who was forfeited soon after, and fled to England ; but not wishing to share his fortunes—or misfortunes—she got her second marriage annulled, and his Majesty gave her in marriage to his own half-brother, the Earl of Atholl, who probably rebuilt the Castle of Balveny, as the motto which he adopted is carved in immense letters over the massy iron gate. When King James the Second sent Lord Atholl against Macdonald, Earl of Ross, his parting benediction was given in these few words, which have ever since continued to be the family motto, " Forth fortune, and fill the fetters !"

The estate of Balveny escaped after all, however, from the descendants of this frequently married heiress, and went, by some odd mischance, to her husband's son by a subsequent marriage, and after remaining with the Earls of

Atholl during five generations, and meeting with various other vicissitudes, now belongs to the Earl of Fife.

A few miles above Ballindalloch is the vale of Glenlivet, famous in modern times for its whisky, and in ancient times for its battle, generally known as the battle of Balrinnes, where the young Earl of Argyll, though only in his eighteenth year, acted as generalissimo for the king, commanding an army of 12,000 men, which was defeated by Lord Huntly at the head of 300 horse. In those days, every commander carried a witch, or a professor of second-sight with him, as regularly as his A D C, and Argyll had been promised that, on the day after this battle, his harp should be played in Buchan, and the bagpipe at Huntly's chief seat in Strathbogie, which prediction was certainly fulfilled to the ear, though not exactly as Argyll expected, for the notes were not those of triumph, and he was not there to enjoy the sound, having retreated to a distant refuge.

A little farther up is the late Duke of Gordon's delightful shooting lodge of Glenfiddich, the well known head-quarters for deer-stalking. The

late floods have rendered it almost unapproachable for the last three miles, as the road has been washed away, and the river must be forded eleven or twelve times to reach the spot, but it is thought that the present noble proprietor prefers encountering these difficulties himself, rather than throw this preserve more open to idle tourists, like ourselves, who "frighten the deer," as it was objected to steam-boats on the Thames that they "frightened the fish."

Between Elgin and its flourishing port Burghhead, stands the large baronial house of Gordonston, well wooded, but otherwise in a featureless flat. It is a plain, square, town-like pile, now beginning to show symptoms of disconsolate neglect, since the Gordon baronets failed, and it fell to the Cumming family, who possess the far more captivating residence of Altyre, in the same county. Within this house is a subterranean cell, in which a peeress was formerly imprisoned by Sir Robert Gordon, that she might be induced to surrender her patrimonial rights, but the lady held out with great spirit, and was at last liberated triumphantly. This family of Gordon were all so clever, that they gained the reputation of

being, in several instances, wizards, and the practice of witchcraft was kept up in Morayshire longer than in any other part of Scotland. Sir Robert Gordon, being the premier Baronet of Scotland, was very jealous on the score of precedency, and having met once at dinner a neighbour recently promoted to an Irish peerage, who was smilingly taking his place first in the procession down stairs, the tall gaunt Sir Robert stalked hastily after his Lordship, grasped his shoulder, and twirling him round, angrily exclaimed, "Na! na! my Lord! ye maun gang to Ireland for that!"

Near Elgin we passed the estate of Elchies, from which one of our Scotch judges formerly took his title. Nothing perplexes English strangers more in Scotland, than our bishops without mitres, and lords without coronets. I remember seeing a great genealogist, who met one of our fifteen judges at dinner, suffering agonies of perplexity on hearing a frequently repeated title, the date and patent of which he could not call to mind, till at last he turned anxiously to Lord ——, who had observed his embarrassment, and said, in allusion to the num-

ber of peers elected to Parliament, "Might I ask, my Lord, if you are one of the sixteen?" "No," replied his Lordship with grave dignity, "I am one of the fifteen!" The strangest choice of a designation I ever knew, was made by one of our judges, who called himself "Lord Unthank!"

Elgin is a beautifully varied little city of eccentric old houses, and charming new streets, built of a stone which surpasses all praise, being exactly of the hue that Cheltenham wishes to appear, a pale, delicate, nankeen colour, and the longer it is exposed the harder it becomes. This is more particularly to be admired in the grand old ruinous cathedral, commonly known as "the Lantern of the North," which looks so perfectly untarnished by time, that it seems more like a building about to be finished, than an aged veteran, whose work is done. The Bishop's house, too, a few yards off, has considerable remains of grandeur. I was recently amused to hear, that the late Lord Dalhousie, not being able at once to understand the difference between St. Peter's and the Vatican, a friend made it plain by saying, "Why, my Lord, only recollect that St. Peter's is the kirk, and the Vatican the manse."

At Elgin cathedral, the elaborate carvings have edges as sharp and distinct as the day they were chiselled, and nothing in sculpture can be more beautiful than the arched door of entrance, with eight fine pillars, surmounted by wreaths of roses in full relief. The octagon chapter-house is also ornamented on the roof with a perfect garden of flowers turned into stone.

The old guide here, a well known character, is commonly called "The Bishop of Moray." His enthusiasm respecting this noble specimen of sacred architecture renders him a desirable cicerone through the old walls, which are in fully better repair than himself, as he can scarcely totter along. The old man leaning on his oaken staff, feels an honest pride in boasting of the diligence with which he has cleaned and arranged the ruins, since he was appointed guardian, and he signalized his reign by moving away 2866 carts of rubbish, which had accumulated in the lapse of ages, concealing some of the steps, and several prostrate fragments of beautiful workmanship. Here "men of marble piecemeal melt away," and our guide has composed a laughable medley of the broken and mutilated statues,

which he arranged in groups according to his own fancy, putting noses on wherever they were wanting, and placing heads upon bodies for which they were never intended. The party which he particularly piqued himself upon, consisted of a face with an expression of suffering, which he called Dives, a good-humoured complacent-looking head near, represented Lazarus, and he had found a colossal dog's head, which was supposed to be licking the sores. A scolding physiognomy, which he discovered beneath a mountain of rubbish, he has stuck up on a tower opposite to another representing the celebrated Wolf of Badenoch, who once did penance here, standing barefoot at the great gate, and who not only robbed and massacred this noble edifice, but finally set it on fire. John Knox generally gets the blame wherever we see a roofless church, but you must acquit him on this occasion, as he can prove an *alibi*, not having yet been born. The old guide informed me that there were on this establishment formerly, two-and-twenty canons, which he thought it necessary to explain were not military but ecclesiastical.

Besides many fine old tombs of bishops and warriors now crumbling to dust, like those they were intended to commemorate, we were shown the coffin of King Duncan, but could hear no account of where his bones had been placed. I am told that, when the burying vault at Lord K——'s was opened some years ago, one of the coffins, which had been evidently burst open, was empty, and a skeleton lay at some distance, leading to the fearful conjecture that the unfortunate person had been interred alive. At the English burial vaults in Munich, each deceased person has a bell placed beside his body, in case he should come alive again! a most desirable precaution in a sultry climate, where the funeral follows so immediately after death. Our cicerone showed us where the last two very popular and talented Dukes of Gordon are interred, and his voice faultered with emotion when he spoke, yet in any less solemnizing situation, you could scarcely have resisted a smile, at the free and easy tone with which he mentioned them as "my people," generally commencing his stories, of which he related many, by saying, "The Duke and I were talk-

ing here one day"——but he did not get so far as to say, like your friend, "I and the Duke!" How astonished noblemen would sometimes feel, if they could suddenly behold a collection of all the intimate friends who speak of them, in remote districts, with a degree of familiarity highly impressive, to country cousins and provincial neighbours; for many aspiring youths, who have dined once in company with a man of rank, or even passed him on the street, think it incumbent on them, ever afterwards, to forget his title; and if it makes them happy, why not? One remarkable phenomenon in the natural history of fashionable life, which I really do pique myself upon having discovered, is, that any gentleman who invariably gives an absent peer his title in mixed society, may, in all probability, have the privilege of dispensing with it if they actually meet; but those who *un-Lord* a nobleman supposed to be at a safe distance, are obliged, when by ill-luck he unexpectedly appears—if on speaking terms at all, which is improbable—to make such an expenditure of Lordships in his presence, as might pay off, with interest, all previous deficiencies. A young lady from the country,

some time ago, when taking a romantic leave of a school companion, the daughter of an Earl, exclaimed in a paroxysm of affection, "Do let us correspond, and may I call you Fanny?" To which the particular friend replied, "Call me what you please, but spare me the letter-writing!"

I must conclude my long epistle with an amusing story in the Scotch dialect, which, though known in this neighbourhood, being related of a celebrated character who resided not far off, may probably be new to you; and even at the worst, it is one of the very few I could venture to tell twice, therefore, try if you can understand it without a glossary.

The Laird of Bonymoon was extremely hospitable, but so exceedingly lazy and indolent, that his sisters could scarcely ever entice him from the fireside; but one morning they entreated him with great anxiety to take a ride for the good of his health.

"Hoot!" said he angrily, "what should gar me gang bumping on a horse, when I can sit quietly here wi' my glass o' toddy!"

"But, brother," answered they, "if anything

should ail you, what would become of us? Pray go for our sakes."

"Weel! ony thing for a quiet life! I'll e'en tak' this weary ride. I'm sure, I wish it was o'er; but mind! 'gin I meet ony body coming this way, I'll bring him back to his dinner; if no', may be I'll dine with some neighbour. John, saddle the horses."

Accordingly off went the laird on a jog-trot awkward-looking horse, boxing the compass with his head to see if any human being were coming his way, as a pretext for turning; but meeting nobody, he arrived at last near the house of an intimate friend.

"Ah, Bonymoon, is this you? I'm very glad to see you! What wind brought you here?"

"Never mind that! I'm come to dine wi' you! What ha' ye got?"

"A bubbly jock and a grilse." *

"John, tak' the horses! Aye, neighbour, ye live weel! Is there ony body wi' ye?"

"Only an English gentleman."

In they went, and the host taking his stranger guest aside, whispered, "I think it necessary

* Turkey and salmon.

to inform you, that I mean to play the laird a trick. He is said to have neither taste nor smell, and I wish to try him with cherry brandy instead of port."

After dinner, wine being put on table, the laird exclaimed, "But what's a' this! you've sent me a different bottle from your own!"

"This is claret, and you like port."

"Aye! aye! give me nane o' ye're washes. Gie me something that'll take a grip o' the stamach."

He then filled a bumper to the King. "Honest man! I like him weel aneuch! Oh! neighbour, hae ye muckle o' this wine! it's the best port I ever tasted! oh! man, it's fine!"

Bumper after bumper was tossed down with increasing relish, till at last the bottle was emptied.

"My guid friend," said the laird, "though you hae few o' thae bottles, will ye treat me to anither?"

"Certainly, Bonymoon! Sandy! another bottle! be sure it is the same."

The laird became more and more captivated with this new vintage of port, but after finishing

the second supply, he made an attempt to rise, saying, " Weel, neighbour! we've spent a very pleasant evening thegether, and had a great deal o' sensible conversation."

" You're not going already?"

" Aye! aye! the lasses at hame 'll be wearying." Saying this he made a second effort to get up, but stumbled and fell back, angrily exclaiming, " Hoot! canna' ye mak' the carpet straight! thae runkles might throw down ony body."

With the help of his obliging neighbour, the laird was mounted on horseback, when the Englishman anxiously remonstrated, saying, " Surely you will not send the gentleman home in such a state! he will meet with some accident!"

" No! no! he is accustomed to it! only let us run up the approach, and hear him pledge the gudewife at my lodge in a dram."

The two listeners arrived in time to hear the laird making many kind enquiries for a' the bairns, and the dialogue concluded by the gatekeeper saying, " It's an unco' raw night! your honor wad na' be the war o' a drap whisky!"

"Deed no, gudewife! The laird's port sits unco' cauld on my stamach. Fill it up!"

Bonymoon having thus primed himself, rode on with some spirit, but soon after, in crossing a small stream, the laird vainly tried to balance himself, but his head proved heaviest, and he slid down into the current.

"John!" said he, "What's that I hear splashing in the water?"

"I'm thinking it's your honor," answered John, getting off his horse to assist his master, who was with great difficulty remounted, but soon after, in passing over a wide moor, a sudden gust of wind carried away the laird's hat and wig, which he ordered John to find immediately.

"It's impossible, your honor! I might as weel look for a needle in a haystack!"

"Never mind that, John! I winna stir without my wig!"

John got down, grumbling loudly, and groping about, until, by good luck, he found them both, when the laird attempted to put his wig on, but having placed the part that should have

been behind, in front, the cue hung over his nose.

"Stop, John! this is no' my wig."

"Your honor maun just be doing then, for there's nae wail o' wigs here!" replied John, coolly mounting his horse, and in this plight the laird arrived at home, where he staggered straight into the drawing-room, when his sisters, not at first recognizing him, screamed aloud with alarm.

"Hoot!" said he, "what are ye bawling at?"

"Brother! is that you!" cried they eagerly. "What in the world has happened to you! Make haste into the fire, and change yourself. Quick! I'm sure it will be long enough before we again recommend a ride for your health."

SPEY BRIDGE.

My dear Cousin,—To do you justice, I scarcely know any one who stands the expence of postage in a more magnanimous spirit than yourself, and accordingly I shall now put you to the test. I often think no vice carries its own punishment along with it so obviously as the love of money —it interferes with every thing—especially on a journey, for there can be few greater annoyances than to be surrounded by grumbling post-boys and discontented landladies; besides which, it impedes all sociability with our friends, all liberality to the poor, poisoning every meal we sit down to, embittering sickness itself on account of the expense, and even diminishing the plea-

sures of a friendly correspondence like ours; in short, it meets you at every corner. However, where necessary, I admire and respect judicious economy, but there can be no consolation for those who practise it in excess without absolute occasion. Those who have a liberal spirit and a limited income know, that what they save in one thing, will be added to their expenditure in something else of more absolute importance, but I cannot sufficiently wonder at those who make money the end of their being, merely for hoarding sake—merely that a cypher may at last be added to their book in the bank! It seems to me the most unaccountable of all infatuations! I have come to the conclusion, after long and careful observation, that the very highest attainment of human good sense is, to proportion your expenses, both charitable and domestic, precisely to your income; for when we see that rich people become almost invariably avaricious, and that when the poor have little, they think it not worth hoarding, and become extravagant, I really think a testimonial should be voted to any man who can be proved to have kept the balance exactly for a certain number

of years, duly considering the claims of his children, his dependents, his religion, and even his own comfort. It is a curious phenomenon how many rich people wish to live as if they were poor, and how many poor people contrive to live as if they were rich!

We this day crossed Spey Bridge without accident or mishap, which is more than the late Duke of Gordon did, who was standing on it during the great flood, eleven years ago, when hearing a sudden crack, he had barely time to flee, before, with the rapidity of lightning and a noise like thunder, a mass of water, piled with full-grown trees and with floating rubbish, swept forward in irresistible power, and buried the noble bridge in a dark and boiling torrent. His Grace, on that occasion, found his retreat cut off towards Gordon Castle, having hurriedly escaped to the wrong side of the river, where he was charitably fed and clothed during several days at Orton, the hospitable residence of Mr. Wharton Duff. A new arch of wood has been since built, a single span, 200 feet wide, which really makes a tolerably long arm across the water.

We still continue at full speed, hopping from

castle to castle, and from mountain to mountain, at a rate that would carry us very speedily round the world. It certainly is a great privilege to take possession of all these magnificent places for an hour or two, enjoying the landscape, pictures, and furniture as if they were our own, and to-day we made a most agreeable and fatiguing house-tour in Gordon Castle, till my eyes became perfectly glassy with exhaustion. I wonder that people ever survive seeing the Louvre! A week at Florence would kill me outright.

Though the grounds of Inverary, Blair Athol, and Hopetoun House, are perhaps more exquisitely lovely than those of Gordon Castle, yet this seems to be, on the whole, the finest ducal residence in Scotland. I am told that the largest mansion in England, Wentworth House, covers the eighth of a mile, but this is also of vast extent, being five hundred and sixty-eight feet long, and built of the splendid Elgin free-stone: "A world of a house!" It is curious that every thing more magnificent or more beautiful than common, is apt to make us melancholy! Music or poetry, or even an unusually generous action,

bring tears starting to the eyes, and I have even known instances where the first surprise of beholding a very majestic edifice has produced this effect, and I could perfectly fancy it arising in such a scene as this. Probably the tears we shed for the moral sublimity of a fine action, may partly be caused by a transient sense of what our nature was originally before the fall.

The park at Gordon Castle is bounded only by the horizon; the trees are gigantic, every thing, in short, appears on the grandest scale, and the great antiquity of this ancient family adds interest and dignity to all we admire. Every page in the history of Scotland seems mingled with the names of Huntly and Gordon, always brave, generous, and loyal,—the first to take arms for their king and country, remaining always true to the family motto, "By courage, not by craft." They flourished and reigned here since Robert Bruce transplanted them from Berwickshire, during two-and-twenty generations; but this noble estate has recently been divorced from the title, and alienated from a name so long supreme among those glens and hills of Strathspey. Can it be possible that the

long line of Huntly and Gordon has actually vanished from the halls of their fathers! This was indeed a nice little succession for those who have inherited it! In ancient days the land frequently carried the title along with it, and, indeed, the time was once when a Marquis of Huntly might have unfurled his standard, rallied his clan around him, and bid defiance to an English successor, but perhaps in these days one could scarcely recommend such an experiment. It was an old rule in Scottish law, to claim all you can, and you may be certain to get more than you have a right to.

One fine old tower of the ancient castle, far surmounting the rest, has remained stedfast, like a monument of past generations, through all the vicissitudes of time, and still continues, greatly excelling the adjoining edifice of more recent date. When I merely say a building is old, let that be considered equivalent to a panegyric, being, as you know, so fond of antiquities that I would any day prefer a Queen Anne's farthing to a good modern guinea. I only wished this venerable tower had been roofless, because we had so toilsome an ascent to the top,

where A—— should have sung the popular song, "Sic a rinin' up stairs!" We were amply repaid, however, at last by a view which it would take me a folio volume to describe; but never rest in peace till you have stood in an ecstacy of delight where we did to-day, and astonished the very stars with your exclamations of rapture.

The entrance hall is decorated with every description of elegant lumber, among which we admired several beautiful busts and statues copied from the antique, particularly the Apollo Belvidere and the Venus de Medici, the grace and expression of which can scarcely be excelled, I should imagine, by their great originals at Florence, which have so long continued to "enchant the world."

Cosmo, Duke of Gordon, received his not very Highland name in compliment to Cosmo, Duke of Tuscany, whose exceedingly ugly bust stands in the entrance-hall, and from his foreign godfather the Duke seems to have derived a truly Italian taste for sculpture, as the entrance-hall would remind you of a marble-cutter's showroom. The stair-carpet here is of Gordon tartan, dark green and purple, which looks rather

sombre, but is considered one of our handsomest Highland plaids. I always feel sorry for the family pictures in an empty house, they look so lonely, cold, and forlorn, but here each individual ancestor seems to have been handsome and distinguished-looking. In the dining-room hangs a complete wreath round the wall, representing Earls, Marquisses, and Marchionesses of Huntly, all looking their very best, as they appeared in the olden time; and the worthy housekeeper seemed to think every grim-looking personage on the walls must have possessed the same title, as she created, without scruple or hesitation, a long succession of Marquisses on the spot.

The first Earl, who had three wives, looks as if he had wept his eyes out for them all, and the first Marquis is a grand aristocratic-looking personage. On his first attending court, being censured for not bowing when introduced, he proudly replied, "I am accustomed to live in a country where every body bows to me!"

George, second Marquis of Huntly, a melancholy-looking man, was beheaded for his attachment to Charles the First. His two eldest sons

were considered the most amiable and distinguished youths of their time, but the first was killed under Montrose, and his brother died of grief for the execution of Charles the First. How enthusiastic was the attachment which that monarch created!

Ladies were sometimes very strange beings long ago! only very long ago, not now,—and we looked with some awe yet, at the ancient Countess of Huntly, who was a most terrifying character in her time. About the year 1590, during her husband's absence, she received the chief of Mackintosh on an embassy of peace, and angrily declared, that there should be no reconciliation till his neck was on the block. The unwary visitor jocularly laid his head on a table in pretended submission, seeing which one of the attendants of the Countess instantly grasped a carving-knife, and severed it from his shoulders. This unhappy victim was nephew to the Earl of Moray. His followers she afterwards imprisoned, and fed them like swine out of a trough; but for these cruelties, and many more, her title was forfeited, though subsequently restored.

The son of this ferocious lady being condemn-

ed to death, she begged his life in vain, and found no more mercy than she had shown. Being considered the handsomest man of the age, Queen Mary became accused of partiality to him, and was forced against her will to witness his execution. Nothing in the way of fortune-telling could be more curious than that which occurred to this Countess's husband, Lord Huntly, who had been warned that he should certainly die at Corraighie. The name sounded to him like Creigh, a place near Aberdeen, which he always afterwards carefully avoided, but when dangerously wounded at the battle of Corraighie, he anxiously inquired the name of the place, on hearing which, he repeated it thrice before he died, "Corraighie! Corraighie! Corraighie! then God be merciful to me!"

Two beautiful representations are extant here of the celebrated Duchess of Gordon, whose witty and eccentric sayings are the favourite theme of every jest-book. Sir Joshua Reynolds had the honour of having executed the very lovely one we first observed, with the finest eyes that ever lighted up a face, but the portrait was not at all characteristic, being drawn with that

pensive, languid, not-particularly-clever expression observable in most of the female portraits by that artist. The other, by Angelica Kauffman, had so noble an aspect, that I should feel proud only to be the nail that it was hung upon. Her Grace's countenance appeared radiant with all that spirit and vivacity for which she was long distinguished, while you could perfectly imagine her uttering some startling and piquant *bon mot*, such as those with which she frequently enlivened the dullest society. There are persons who seem formed for the situations they occupy, and when I remember Jane Duchess of Gordon's queen-like majesty of appearance and commanding manner, it seems as if by nature she could never have been otherwise than the leading person in every circle, even without the adventitious aid of her exalted rank.

Her Grace, when dying, desired to be buried at her own favourite and romantic residence, Kinrara, on the Spey. She ordered that for her epitaph the names and titles of all her daughters should be engraved on the tombstone, where I am told they may now be read at full length. Among the number are included three

Duchesses and a Marchioness. Certainly no one ever played more successfully at the game of "catch honours."

The Duke, her husband, lived to the age of eighty-four, and is represented in every stage of existence, from childhood to the most advanced period of life. It would have been amusing to arrange the whole series close together! He is exhibited first on the staircase, when two years old, as Cupid, equipped with wings and a quiver; but to these customary decorations a light tartan scarf is superadded, while the mischievous little sprite looks highly entertained at his extraordinary transformation into a Highlander.

Five other portraits of his Grace hang elsewhere; the first painted at Rome, where he has evidently returned from a capital day's sport, being surrounded by tired looking dogs and dead game. In another frame, he sports a fancy dress; and this likeness was said to have been painted by Raeburn at the time of his marriage. His Grace next looks down from the wall in his Lord Lieutenant's uniform, and last, in extreme old age, with his star and

ribbon, which I remember his invariably wearing in the evenings, being of the now exploded opinion, that such honourable decorations should occasionally be seen, and need not be reserved only for a coronation. The Duke was an excellent performer on the violin, and delighted so peculiarly in Scotch music, that if every one felt as keen a national partiality, the Italian Opera-House would soon be deserted.

There are three pictures at Gordon Castle of the celebrated Lord Peterborough, looking very spirited and consequential, as if "a thousand hearts were great within his breast;" and certainly few heroes have merited a larger leaf of laurel. As a lady once impatiently remarked of her husband, "cats have nine lives, but he seemed to have ten." In one of Lord Peterborough's portraits, he wears a wig waving in billows over his shoulders, which five ordinary heads of hair could scarcely have supplied. He would have made an excellent frontispiece for Rowland's macassar oil; but in these days a wig must have been almost as expensive as an estate, when a country girl received L.60 for

her ringlets, and an old woman's grey hair was sold for L.50 !

Lord Peterborough said, after visiting Fenelon, " If I had stayed with him any longer, I should have become a Christian in spite of myself !" How unfortunate for him now, that he did not ! His courage in the field was only excelled by the firmness with which he sustained the long agonies of a painful death, but his was the stern endurance of a Stoic, not the enlightened resignation of a Christian. Even when folding his mantle around him to fall with dignity, he was coldly sarcastic in talking of Christianity, and merely said, that " he made a point of being civil to all religions," a species of compromise only too common now ! It is curious that Lord Peterborough's daughter, the Duchess of Gordon, introduced the Protestant faith into this family, previously bigoted Roman Catholics, but being left guardian of her son, while a minor, she brought him up in her own creed, which was, fortunately, less accommodating than that of her father. When we see a cold, hard, stern, disposition like his, united to such great natural en-

dowments, it reminds me of a frost-bound garden, where no flowers nor fruit can flourish; and till the good seed be sown, till the dew fall, and the sun shine from heaven upon the barren waste, how cheerless and desolate a sight it must ever remain.

We admired much, a very handsome portrait, in full Highland garb, of the late very popular Duke,—the last heir of his long line! The world has been so accustomed for centuries to have Dukes of Gordon successively appearing, that it seems quite strange now without one! In the same room hangs a picture, such as you seldom see, representing the Duke of Perth, so dignified, so animated, and so very intellectual looking, that the whole expression was in character with the history of one, who was "as brave as he was bonny." The dress consists of a graceful plaid thrown over his Highland uniform. What a misfortune to gentlemen of taste, being born in the present century, when their whole genius must limit itself to a blue coat and black neck-cloth! The worst portrait in this collection is one of George IV., presented by his Majesty to the late Duke, but it is a most unworthy repre-

sentation of "the first gentleman in Europe," looking more like some country actor performing a burlesque, and exactly in the attitude of Lord Bateman's "proud porter."

We were considerably entertained by a full length portrait of James the Second's Queen, when in exile. She is consoling herself by feeding a pet lamb, while her crown is laid on the ground in a garden, her dog lies at her feet, her flowers are scattered about, and a book is in her hand, so she is apparently resolved to find comfort in something, and her Majesty looks so fat and good-humoured, that the cares of abdication have evidently sat very lightly on her brow. She seemed by no means in the vein of exclaiming, like the celebrated John Home, when vexed by some trifling disappointment,

> "Let petrifaction stop this falling tear,
> And fix my form for ever marble here!"

A very antique portrait of Queen Mary is at Gordon Castle, said, of course, to be original, and I almost believe it. The date is 1568, the last year of her liberty, and it has the brilliant look of health and animation, which vanished,

after every gay vision of power and glory had been blotted out by her tears.

I have no song of youth and hope,
That does not close in care;
I have no tale of woman's love
That ends not in despair;
I only breathe the *name* of joy
To tell how soon it dies;
I only sing the songs that suit
Thy notes, my harp of sighs.

In the same collection is shown the portrait of a young beauty, who might certainly have rivalled Queen Mary herself. She was the favourite friend of a former Duchess, who must have been superior to envy or jealousy, but the name of this lovely vision is forgotten by our cicerone, so she must remain anonymous. Any young lady, with one feature of her face, might set up for a beauty, for they are all equally perfect. The Magazin des Modes would describe her dress as "a robe of rich white satin, a scarf of torquoise blue, and her chesnut hair simply combed back off her forehead." The lovely countenance was painted so much to the life, that she seemed to blush when we looked at her.

One of the ancient pictures in this collection represents Herodias carrying the head of John the Baptist in a charger; but the artist has given her much too gentle and feminine an expression, though, certainly, the sweetest countenances do sometimes conceal the sternest minds; and when you see a fixed unalterable smile in any face, with a particularly subdued manner, the probabilities are ten to one that this habitual aspect has been assumed as a necessary veil to hide the real temper.

The only cheerful portrait of Charles the First, that I ever beheld, is here! He has undeniably relaxed into a smile, and looks as if he might, occasionally in his life, have enjoyed a happy moment.

Connoisseurs all agree in saying, that the finest painting in this collection is that of St. Paul rebuking St. Peter. The colouring and expression are so exceedingly forcible, that I could not get far enough off to catch the general effect advantageously, but it looked too hard and distinct, having very much the effect of a *tableau vivant*, without the gauze curtain.

I could not but reflect, in looking around on

those ancient walls and pictures, what a busy interesting world this has been before we entered it! So many distinguished men! so many beautiful women! so many fine painters! so many venerable books, in black letter, and in white letter! so many banners now idly waving over our heads, and so many broad-swords rusting in their scabbards, which wanted only the heroes who wielded them, to become as bright and as powerful as ever! Ours is a busy world still, but how different! What a sordid money-making activity bestirs us now! Men were formerly estimated according to their heroism, their bodily strength, or their talents, but now the standard of everything is wealth,—not even the use that is made of it, but the mere possession! We examined in the armoury Charles Edward's leathern purse, with a silver clasp, which he presented to the then Duke of Gordon. It is scarcely more empty now, than it was while he owned it; but where would any one find in the present day, partizans as ready on a chivalrous impulse to forfeit their wealth and estates! The first question now, prepara-

tory to engaging in any new undertaking is, "what per cent. will it bring?" Men are flocking to Australia for twenty per cent., or to be devoured by the cannibals of New Zealand for thirty, while even sportsmen no longer carry their guns on the moors, without an eye to profit, but make money by their very amusements. Many become poulterers now, and sell the birds they kill, or have them potted for the East Indian market! or exchange them for shot! What old lady can ever hope now, to receive her annual box of grouse with anybody's compliments, when, as Dr. Johnson wisely observes, "Few men give what they can sell."

It has been often remarked, that the richest and most extravagant Englishmen generally turn extremely saving when they enter Scotland, probably imagining that we are not accustomed to see much expense; but among those who contract to supply dealers with game at so much per head, from our Highland moors, are found the young heirs to some of the highest honours and most extensive properties in the south. Grouse are, however, the unconscious

benefactors of Scotland, by gathering the best company round them, as, without their attractions, we should be almost entirely deserted.

A charming sheltered garden lies close behind Gordon Castle, very tastefully laid out, the gravel walks meandering like a chain round a brilliant patch-work of flower-beds, which are thus cut into diagonal squares, with here and there a morsel of smooth turf to vary the colouring. At some distance may be seen a still more beautiful parterre, which has been laid out in a stone quarry. The soil is, of course, all artificial, but you can imagine nothing more picturesque than the strange irregularities of ground. It would almost weary you to look at the steep walks leading towards precipices, sloping banks, and shady recesses, varied by moss-houses, stone basins hewn from the quarry, jets d'eau, Egyptian obelisks, and a miniature Parthenon carved in the same rock on which it stands. At the gate are placed some inimitable old sculptured stones from the ancient parish church of Fochabers, which bestow a look of great antiquity on the entrance, and the whole is enlivened by a brilliant profusion of showy

flowers, and by the most emerald-coloured grass you can fancy. This is a small fragment of fairy land, wanting only the talking bird, the golden water, and the singing apple.

After leaving the quarry, we entered a walk, shaded by enormous natural hollies, which must be magnificent when the dark varnished leaves are enlivened by their scarlet berries like bunches of coral. Many are more than forty feet high, with stems five or six feet in circumference, and some being grouped together in clusters of a dozen large trunks, I almost mistook for moderate sized beeches. It is a curious provision of nature for the protection of hollies, that all the lower leaves, within reach of cattle, are furnished with strong prickles to serve as a defensive armour, but the upper branches are not.

We were misled, on many occasions to-day, by the uncommon size to which several species of trees have enlarged themselves. You were diverted formerly by the little girl at her lessons, who said, "how can I make a mistake now, when I am four years old!" but we, at a still more advanced period of life, made a few to-day, during our wanderings through the

park. Two fine aspen trees passed themselves off upon me, at a distance, for full grown oaks, till I observed them in a quiver of agitation. Their stems were fourteen feet round, and before severing into branches, the solid trunk rose thirteen feet high. The bark was of so uniform a tint, and the arch of leaves so perfect, that they looked like two pillars of Elgin Cathedral come out to take the air. Sir James Hall once planted a cathedral of trees at Dunglas, the long aisles represented by the tall white columns of the poplar trees, the branches of which formed, at one end, a fine Gothic window.

Near those aspens at Gordon Castle, we saw a noble ash tree, living in a most critical situation. The massy trunk had been split from top to bottom in the late hurricane, but both halves were yet standing. At every breeze they yawned asunder, and closed again, creaking and groaning in a most fearful manner, as if haunted by some troubled spirit. The leaves were still flourishing as gay as ever, unconscious of their impending fate, but this hoary patriarch of the forest is evidently struggling with a mortal

wound, though we hurried to a gardener with information of the catastrophe, hoping that an iron bandage might, for some time longer, preserve it alive. When Lord S——n, some years ago, intended cutting down several ancient ash trees, a friend induced him to grant them a reprieve, by saying, in a tone of remonstrance, "Surely you will not disturb the ashes of your ancestors?"

The chief ornament of this ducal park is a graceful lime tree, beneath which stood the favourite seat of Duchess Jane, when surrounded by her chosen companions. We sat under the vast shadow of this forest chief, surrounded by a wall of leaves which swept to the ground on every side, forming an arbour of 200 feet circumference, and there we recalled the gay spirits and joyous scenes which once enlivened this solitary bower. The Hamadryad who presides here, must then have enjoyed a merry time of it! Her Grace might almost have worn the bracelet of another equally celebrated Duchess who, rather whimsically, desired this inscription to be set on it in diamonds, "I shall never lose my spirits?" How happy for those who can keep such

a resolution, but the power to do so requires a more secure foundation than our own most resolute intentions.

One of the lodges in this park looks so exactly as if built of parliament cakes, that it has been called "The Parliament House." It is an excellent imitation of a Jager's house in Switzerland, and produces a very striking effect here. The old gamekeeper who kept it was so eager for sport, that the late Duke laughingly said to him one day, "You would shoot your own grandfather, if he fell in your way?" It used to be amusing long ago, before moors were "let furnished," to discover how very little conception the English had of game being ever preserved in the Highlands, as they fancied it was only necessary to land at Dundee or at Aberdeen, and to load their guns. A Scotch proprietor, some years ago, met a large party going north, fully equipped with guns and dogs, but could not precisely ascertain what moors they had leave upon, till at last it came out, that they were merely at random, "going to shoot in the north!" The rent of a barren moor is

now almost equal to that of the best arable land!

Several years since, an English stranger, who had never probably seen grouse or red-deer even in the zoological gardens, returned from an excellent day's sport, saying he had shot eight head of deer! They all turned out to be goats!

I was much amused to hear a narrow escape made by Sheridan when he was deer-shooting once in the north; but his ingenuity was equal to every emergency, and delivered him on this occasion. The Duke of Atholl having furnished him with an escort of Highlanders, besides a luxurious and very substantial luncheon, he began the day's sport by sitting down to finish the wine and refreshments, during which unusual commencement of the campaign, his companions, after consulting aside for some time, came forward in a body, and sternly asked whether he were any relation to "that wicked fellow Sheridan of London, who had dared to abuse Lord Melville?"

"What do you take me for?" answered Sheridan, with well-feigned indignation. "Related to

such a fellow as that! If I could only catch the rascal, I would hang him on the spot!"

"So should we, as soon as look at him!" replied the trusty escort, confidentially, and poor Sheridan, who frequently told the story afterwards, lost no time in making a pretext to hurry home.

If Gordon Castle degenerate into a mere shooting-box, it has at least the attraction of a splendid deer-forest, which has become a more fashionable scene for sportsmen now, than even the moors. We were shown the horns of a red-deer, shot by Alexander Duke of Gordon after his Grace was eighty. A circle of deer's heads is placed round the room, each carrying an inscription to commemorate the history of his own death, how, when, where, and by whom he was massacred. Thus every skull becomes in itself a monument and an epitaph!

We ought to believe any thing on sufficient evidence, and the very incredible fact seems now ascertained, that the deer eat their own horns! It was proved to the satisfaction of a learned jury once, that a man had bit off his own nose, but this achievement of the deer seems nearly as difficult. Gamekcepers, to whom the horns might

be a valuable perquisite, hardly ever find any stray antlers during the season at which they are shed, and fragments have been discovered occasionally in the animal's throat when dissected. One red-deer was found dead, having apparently committed suicide, as it was choked by a bit of its own horn. People who bite their nails, must have a somewhat similar propensity!

A lady remarked lately, that she felt thankful to be born in an age when worsted work was in fashion, as she never knew the real happiness of life till she tried it, but nothing shews more obviously the tedium suffered by gentlemen at home, than to observe the hardships they will gladly endure in search of what is called sport. A soldier would deserve to be covered with military glory for encountering as many privations and difficulties to defend his country, as a drawing-room fine gentleman will cheerfully welcome in pursuit of a single red-deer. He spends nights in watching on the hills, days standing up to the knees in water, springs over peat-bogs, lies perdu for hours among the heather, crawls along the bed of a burn, or wades across a river, reckoning every thing a pleasure that promotes this

fascinating amusement. A gentleman, lately, accustomed to all his comforts, gravely remarked, after a few days' laborious experience, " How pleasant it was, to lie all night under a plaid upon the hill-side, and to hear the rain pattering around!"

We had rain " pattering" in abundance all the way from Gordon Castle, for now a ceaseless busy drizzle began. The foliage, however, formed so thick a canopy along the approach, that we scarcely remembered to raise an umbrella, though on reaching the high road, it had become, like the Nile, a river of mud.

In passing, we made a leisurely survey of the fruit and vegetable gardens, containing six acres within the wall; and I took a turn also in the hot-houses, to remind myself of what summer used to be, when we had warm weather occasionally. Here we saw, in the richest perfection, figs, pines, grapes, peaches, nectarines,—everything, in short, except people to eat them, and around us were bowers of blooming plants,—cactusses drooping unnoticed, heaths looking beautiful in vain, and roses of a hundred varieties " wasting"——no! that hackneyed quota-

tion is, like many others, worn to rags, and must positively be left off. There ought to be a severe fine against every person now, who "sits like patience on a monument"—who "drags at each remove a length'ning chain"—who "blushes unseen"—who "flies from grave to gay"—or who "hints a fault and hesitates dislike,"—but I shall not conclude my letter, as you expect, by saying, that my heart is "untravelled," for with my whole heart I enjoy travelling, and regret every mile we leave behind, as if I were losing an estate.

FOCHABERS.

Lord Harry has written a novel—
A story of elegant life;
No stuff about love in a hovel,
No sketch of a clown and his wife.
But full of such elegant touches!
Our lips in derision we curl,
Unless we are told how a Duchess
Conversed with her cousin, the Earl.

My dear Cousin,—The unfortunate man who had his choice of working in the mines, or reading through a folio volume, preferred the bodily to the mental labour; but you shall herewith be condemned unheard to endure several folio pages this morning, and to work out a perfect mine of information, therefore, put on your spectacles of criticism, and accompany me through my life and adventures during a long and busy day.

At Fochabers, Murray the innkeeper, who retired from business this year, was originally a foundling, and never had a guess of his own history, but all his life he annually receives a blank cover containing L.50. Now, there is a ready made novel for you at once! According to all the rules of romance, he must some day find himself out to be, at least, a peer. I wonder what titles and estates will unexpectedly prove to be his?

The inhabitants of this little hamlet should all become literary characters, seeing, that besides the many academies already in action, a native of Fochabers recently bequeathed L.20,000 to establish schools here; and Mr. Dick left so large a fortune to increase the salaries of schoolmasters in the counties of Aberdeen, Banff, and Elgin, that here the alphabet might be printed in letters of gold. At the little inn of Grantown, our plates displayed the alphabet an inch long marked all round the margins, that travellers may lose no time in exercising their intellects while eating; and I heard of lessons being taught in politics lately, by having political sentiments written in

pastry across the tarts for dinner; but now, even while washing and combing their hair, children are taught appropriate verses; and when I hear a mob of ragged boys singing, "This is the way we wash our face," it gives me pleasure to know that the ceremony is ever performed at all.

Infant schools would be a most beneficial invention for both parents and children in the lower ranks, even though it involve the Spartan principle of a separation between them, if we could only obtain a concession on behalf of those very juvenile students, that there shall be half the quantity of lessons administered, and double the quantity of play allowed. The mechanical, and almost regimental exercises which these baby scholars go through, under the misapplied name of amusement, amount to so strict a restraint on mind and body, that they should, in fairness, be ranked in the class of lessons, because nothing but perfect natural freedom can be a complete relaxation to children, and so incessant a drilling as the little creatures undergo must prove injurious and exhausting.

We inspected one infant school near Fochabers, where ninety-five children under eight years old were improving their minds. I certainly never saw a more beautiful group! Ninety of them at least were pretty, while all, without exception, looked clean, well-dressed, and healthy. The day having proved wet, none of them got out to play, but the pains-taking schoolmistress kept up, in a close hot room, a succession of singing, marching, and countermarching, mechanically, till the whole juvenile party were at last allowed to sit down, suffering agonies of drowsiness. When we entered, three or four had fallen back on the laps of those behind, others required a rousing like Baron Trenck, several were singing, the eyes rolling in their heads, a few had made a desperate struggle and cried themselves awake, while many approached as nearly to somnambulism as Lady Macbeth. The continual singing is in itself somniferous; a certain degree of monotony becomes quite unavoidable in the lessons; and even the clapping of hands and beating of feet, though excellent as an occasional exercise for very young

pupils, cannot fairly come under the designation of play, which must be the dictate of spontaneous instinct and buoyant natural spirits.

It is most true, as the well known proverb says, that "an idle mind is Satan's favourite workshop," and poor children, when left at home, are lamentably neglected, while they cannot but thus acquire confused notions of right and wrong, being more punished by their busy hard-working parents, for being merely troublesome, than for the worst moral offences, besides becoming hopelessly idle, ignorant, and slovenly, impeding the labours of those who support them, and learning neither habits nor principles in accordance with religion. During the few years of childhood, therefore, when, being too young for any profitable labour, they might have time to learn the reading of their Bibles, it is indeed a blessing that they have the opportunity to acquire all such knowledge of holy Scripture as human teaching can impart; and certainly it has been a useful discovery of modern times, that when children are taught to read, they can be taught also to understand what they read, therefore, much gratitude is due to those who, by the institution of infant

schools, rescue young families from the ruin of both body and soul, which must, too probably, result from the unavoidable neglect which awaits them at home. Yet even the very best things may be over done, so that the forced intellects and forced spirits of infants should be allowed a very large proportion of entire, unconstrained relaxation, to recover their natural tone. Before seven or eight years old, the disposition, feelings, and principles, can successfully be regulated, but very little knowledge can be safely instilled at so feeble an age, without overstretching the faculties, as much as if a tottering child attempted to carry a burden intended for a man. The heart is capable of being trained before the head, but all that can be gained by unnatural stimulus in unripe age, is lost to mind and body afterwards.

The four elder children at Fochabers exhibited astonishing powers of memory, and a knowledge of the Bible which a divinity student could scarcely excel. It was perfectly amazing! No spectator could have been otherwise than delighted, as we were, and all I would advocate, while discussing the system of early training

among poor children, is, that for every hour of lessons, they should be allowed an hour of real undeniable romping, and become initiated occasionally in the mysteries of hide and seek, or blind man's buff. One of the most learned and accomplished scholars I ever knew, used to mention that he was formerly very partial to chess, but finding it more a study than a game, it did not afford sufficient relaxation to be considered a mere amusement, nor was it useful enough to be followed as a pursuit, therefore, he unwillingly relinquished that interesting employment of time, but I saw him soon afterwards engaged with a joyous young party of children, playing at battledore and shuttlecock, which seemed thoroughly to unbend for the time, a mind long and successfully exerted for the best interests of man. We are all aware that, as the bow requires to be often unstrung, the more pliant it may be, the more absolutely necessary that reaction becomes.

Apropos of very juvenile precociousness, I was greatly diverted lately to read an advertisement, of a new astringent application for the gums,

beginning, "Children cutting their teeth are respectfully informed!"——

We had a charming drive from Fochabers to Cullen House, one of the most splendid places in Scotland, formerly the seat of Lord Findlater's family, as long as there was a Lord Findlater to inherit it, but now belonging to the family of Grant, Lord Seafield. It might be exercise enough during winter to walk every day through all the seven drawing-rooms, and to stir the seven fires! You would be quite charmed by the magnificent suite of apartments, and by the beautiful entrance-hall, decorated with rare exotics and marble busts,—the one being the most evanescent, and the other the most durable ornaments with which we can adorn our abodes.

There are several battalions of pictures here, both foreign and domestic, many of which are extremely interesting. In the first room we saw such a congress of kings, that one would require Hume's History of England to bring them all to mind. The fine full-length likeness of James the Sixth, by Mytens, encountered an odd adventure in its day,—a riotous mob, during the

revolution, tore it down from the walls of Holyrood House, and were kicking this royal portrait ignominiously along the street, when Lord Findlater, then Chancellor of Scotland, made a spirited attack on the angry multitude, and successfully rescued his Majesty from so degrading a situation.

The extinct line of Lords Findlater inherited great talents, and were all considered supremely handsome, particularly the Earl who flourished when the Union was signed. The portrait of him at Cullen House fully justifies his reputation, being of a most noble and commanding aspect, very unlike the flippancy of character he displayed, when, after signing the roll which put an end to the independence of Scotland, he coolly tossed away his pen, saying, "There is the end of an old song!"

Six years afterwards, however, Lord Findlater's dormant patriotism was awakened by beholding various acts of injustice to Scotland, in consequence of which, he tried to get a new edition of the old song, having made a motion in the House of Lords to dissolve the Union; and

he divided the votes, fifty-four against fifty-four, but was ultimately defeated by four proxies.

Another Lord Findlater we saw who distinguished himself as an agriculturalist, and introduced turnips in this neighbourhood, for which he will scarcely be thanked by the epicures in milk and cream. A poor criminal was condemned to severe punishment once, for stealing a turnip, because, as the judge sternly remarked, "turnips lead to legs of mutton."

One family portrait in this gallery is admirably painted, and the hand has been thought so perfect a *chef d'œuvre*, that an artist once came from Italy to study it. The countenance looks more alive than many living men! This picture represents the most accomplished and highly gifted of all the Findlater family, who overstrained his great intellect until at length he became deranged, and died in the most melancholy of all ways. His expression of countenance looks excited, though indicating extreme talent, and his dress appears remarkably picturesque, but you will not easily suppose it graceful, when I mention that he is equipped in

a loose yellow dressing-gown and a white night-cap! By a curious coincidence I mistook his portrait for one of Cowper, who serves as another melancholy evidence how often "great wit to madness nearly is allied."

The ladies in this family seem all to have been less good-looking than their lords, and if a "Book of Beauty" had been published in those days, would scarcely have been as well entitled to fill a page. The last Countess of Findlater was a foreigner, and became blind during many of her latter years. The portrait of her predecessor was hung up, as a mark of extraordinary respect, in the county rooms of Aberdeen, —a public testimony to female excellence almost unprecedented. When this Lady Findlater was told that, owing to the embarrassed condition of her husband's affairs, the estate must be sold, she firmly replied, "No! not an acre!" and by extraordinary management she saved the whole of this beautiful property, besides which, she has signalized her memory by leaving a magnificent evidence of her taste and liberality. The house formerly stood in an almost unapproachable position, being nearly surrounded by

a broad and very deep chasm, the sides of which were equally difficult to ascend or to descend, and almost impossible for a carriage, but Lady Findlater erected, at the expense of her own privy purse, a noble bridge of one splendid arch, sixty feet high and eighty-two feet wide, which springs across the widely separated precipices, and forms a beautiful object from the windows, as well as a most convenient access.

The trees which adorn this glen are particularly fine, and the river scenery most enchanting, with an abundant flow of crisp clear water, and the green sloping banks charmingly wooded and gaily peopled by a musical colony of birds. One great delight of the country arises from the intimacy we form with all the animal species, which soon become our familiar friends; cattle, horses, dogs, sheep, deer, cows, and every living creature, become a source of interest, whose habits of life, temper, manner, and conduct, it is a perpetual amusement to study. Even a bee-hive is equal to any rout in a city, being as crowded, hot, and noisy, while each individual carries a sting which may or may not be used as he pleases. I could sit for an hour giv-

ing language to their busy hum, or, like Gil Blas, making dialogues for the birds.

Over all the windows of this venerable pile may be seen eye-brows of handsomely sculptured stone, with initials, dates, coats of arms, and grotesque heads, in addition to which, several moral and religious sentences are inscribed in very antique characters. Two of these which I decyphered contain very sound divinity, and convey a pleasing testimony to the spirit of piety in which this ancient house was originally founded, and for which, in the existing generation, it is still pre-eminent,—"Faith is the ground of our hope," we find engraved beside one window, and near that which adjoins it, "Hope is the anchor of faith."

Our drive towards Banff led through a rich granary, where, not many years ago, the whole country was a wide wilderness of bog. Here the poor can scarcely be called poor at all, they are so liberally attended to by Lord Fife, the chief proprietor in this neighbourhood, who is said to employ above three hundred persons on the grounds of Duff House alone, giving work to those who will work, and money to those who

prefer being idle. The daily distribution which takes place here of gold and silver coin would astonish even Dr. Alison, and outrun his utmost wishes, but the system produces many practical illustrations of that old German proverb, "a shilling earned is worth two shillings begged." It is a pleasure, at the same time, to know that all who will obey the fourth commandment, which as imperatively orders people to labour during six days of the week, as to rest on the seventh, may there find employment; and I was much amused to hear, that when children are at work on the gravel walks, a shilling is frequently concealed under the stones, that the first who rakes it up may receive this welcome reward for diligence and activity.

What a curious contrast might be drawn between the munificence of Lord Fife, who is said to distribute a larger income on gratuitous charity than any nobleman in Scotland, and the parsimony of his predecessor, Lord Braco, who picked up a farthing on his own approach once, and being earnestly importuned for it by a beggar, hurried the treasure into his pocket, saying, "Fin' a farthing to yoursell, puir body!" This

old nobleman was so celebrated a miser, that I felt much inclined to sound the pannels and floors at Duff House, in search of hidden treasure.

Several very primitive customs are still observed in this part of the country. When farmers come to market, they pay nothing at the inn for being lodged or entertained, but some time afterwards, "mine host" performs a tour of visits among all those who favoured him with their company, and then he graciously accepts presents, according to the wealth or the gratitude of his ci-devant guests, who load him with hay, cheese, butter, eggs, or poultry, till, like the lady in Roman history, he is almost buried beneath the weight of gifts and offerings heaped upon him. A very convenient custom is also observed by poor people, when about to marry upon nothing, who have what is appropriately called "a penny wedding." The happy couple call on each of their neighbours to announce the propitious event, and to enquire at the same time what the friends are willing to subscribe towards increasing and prolonging the comfort of their wedded life. At these marriages two hundred people

sometimes assemble, while no guests are expected to appear without an offering in some shape or other, a loaf, a cheese, a bottle of whisky, or even, in cases of extreme poverty, half-a-dozen eggs. The entertainment which ensues is kept up occasionally for several days, and instead of bottle-sliders, on which to pass the bottles, they are frequently placed on blue bonnets.

Every mortal is weary of listening to accounts of the melancholy festivities which take place at Highland funerals, but I could not help being amused to hear, that when three Strathspey lairds set out to attend the burial of the late Rothiemurchus, one of them gravely remarked, "How drunk we shall all be this time to-morrow!"

At a great chieftain's house where guests used formerly to be over the mast-head in claret and champagne, but where modern sobriety and decorum have been introduced by the present proprietor, an old Highland laird was heard indignantly muttering to himself as he left the table, "Oich! if this isn't the first time she ever dined at Castle Grant, and was able to go up the stairs by hersell."

I was shocked to hear that an old clergyman, well known for his convivial propensities, who died last year, wishing his funeral to become peculiarly jovial, bequeathed a large stock of claret for his friends to finish on the occasion, and his old boon companions standing in a circle round the grave, filled their glasses to his memory, and afterwards poured a share of the contents on the earth beneath which he was interred.

The neat and cheerful town of Banff is proverbially alluded to by the Scotch as Coventry is in England. If one of the common people be angry at another, he exclaims in a tone of bitterness, "Go to Banff!" I felt perfectly well satisfied, however, to visit this very respectable town, though often extremely indignant formerly, at being told by our old nursery-maid to go there. The streets were clean and airy, though not particularly remarkable in any way, but probably the inhabitants contrive to be very happy here, and if not, we cannot help them.

The object of chief interest in this neighbourhood is Duff House. The park seems many miles in circumference, beyond which, we admired

in every direction the fine fields brought into cultivation, and the flourishing hedges planted by Lord Fife, who has resided here uninterruptedly for some years past in strict seclusion, occupied in benefiting the place and people around. The style of architecture here, is, like most of Adams' plans, quite French, a tall, square, handsome edifice, of massy proportions, ornamented with Corinthian pilasters, and externally scattered over with stone vases and statues, but the house is greatly in want of wings to give it lightness. Within we found it perfectly Louvrized with pictures, all remarkably interesting, and many first rate works of art, at which criticism may vainly level her eye-glass.

You never saw walls so crowded as these with heroes, statesmen, authors and beauties of former days, every body, in short, who ever lived, and a great many more. We might have called over a muster-roll of all the celebrated names in Scotland, or elsewhere, and the answer would be, "Here!" It appeared like living a century in an hour, when we paraded through ten or twelve large rooms, glancing along the line of celebrated personages, whose names had once

resounded throughout the world. How many stories and remembrances rushed into our thoughts as we contemplated the features with which they had passed through life, and tried to trace an expression suited to their well-known characters and adventures. It was a singular panorama! The great, the good, the wicked, and the profligate, all side by side in a strange equality, that seemed like that of the grave itself! Among other odd combinations, we observed one uncongenial quartette, consisting of Dr. Dodd, Dean Swift, George Buchanan, and lastly, John Knox, of whom the Regent Morton said in his funeral panegyric, "There lies he who never feared the face of man." He was, indeed, one who, to use the language of Shakespeare, "took the buffets and rewards of fortune with equal thanks," being singly and solely devoted to the cause he had embraced; but in the collision of opposite opinions, how carefully should the very best of Christians guard against excess! Our venerable Scottish reformer was far from desiring that wide devastation among our churches for which his own words seemed to give a license, when he said, "Pull down the

nests, and the rooks will fly," and for uttering which, Dr. Johnson said, he should have been buried in the highway; but those who once rouse the multitude to violence, might as well throw down the bars of a menagerie, and expect still to master the powerful and dangerous inhabitants. In the one case as much as in the other, the weak govern the strong by intellectual superiority, but the moment mere animal force comes into play, this aspect of affairs is entirely reversed.

The old housekeeper here, a well-known personage, who has been sixty years in office, having learned by rote, a list of the pictures and artists, makes most amusing havoc of the foreign names, " Sir Francis Kennawlis for Knollys, and Sir Godfrey Kennawler," but she was peculiarly perplexed by the approximation of names between a fat laughing Moliere, and a dark Spanish looking Murillo. The good woman would have a poor chance of toleration from the gentleman who broke off his marriage with a young lady, because she betrayed such ignorance as not to know the difference between Mrs. Montagu and Lady Mary Wortley Montague!

One of the best pictures here, a miniature in oil, of a philosopher contemplating a skull, was painted by the celebrated blacksmith, Van Eyck, —not Handel's harmonious blacksmith, but one of still greater notoriety.

We admired, in one room, a conclave of blooming beauties, all associated together without very special reference to rank or character, but each apparently balloted for on the score of pre-eminent loveliness. No eastern harem described by Lady Mary Wortley Montague could produce a group of Sultanas at all to be compared with Lucy Waters, Lady Carlisle, Jane Shore, Lady Castlemain, the Countess of Coventry, Queen Mary, the Duchess of Portsmouth, or Nell Gwyn—a pretty set in every sense! What some people would call mixed society—or rather unmixed, where none were quite respectable.

> Ah! Shore could tell what ills from beauty spring,
> And Sedley curs'd the charms which pleased a king.

Several of these ladies wore hoops, expanding their dresses till they looked like a tent, covering half an acre of carpet, but though costumes in-

vented by the caprice of fashion become, in a few years, ludicrous even in the eyes of those who wore them, such lovely features, moulded into beauty by nature's own magical touch, are admired alike in every succeeding age, and in every varied rank.

One of the most curious portraits here, is a full-length in black, representing the Duchess of Richmond, by Vandyke. Her Grace looks as if she had lived on nothing more solid all her life than poetry and sentiment, reading an elegy for breakfast, and a sonnet for dinner. The matrimonial part of her history is much more extraordinary than fiction! She married first a wealthy man of low origin, who very complaisantly died soon, leaving her a rich widow. Having been next engaged to Sir George Rodney, he was treacherously jilted for the Earl of Hertford, on which occasion her disappointed lover penned a farewell letter in his own blood, and killed himself. Her second husband, the Earl, having in due time expired, she mounted another step in the ladder of preferment by marrying the Duke of Richmond, and being once more set at liberty, her ambition aspired

to a crown, and she set her widow's cap at old King James the I., who actually proved invulnerable, and thus cruelly stopped the career of her promotion, when she had probably often soliloquized, like Lady Macbeth, "Glamis and Cawdor! the greatest is behind!"

We admired much a lovely picture of the young Chevalier St. George when a boy, dressed in crimson and gold. The Chevalier D'Eon appeared also, in full uniform, his face like the knocker on a door; and not far off Colonel Gardiner, the hero of Prestonpans, a fine military-looking figure in full caparison for battle, wearing a pair of jack boots so enormous that you wonder how he ever got into them, or is ever to get out. There never died on the field of battle a braver soldier or a better Christian, and most heroically did he realize his word, that "having one life to sacrifice for the good of his country, he would not spare it!" His own regiment fled, but he cheered on another which had been deprived of its colonel, and was twice severely wounded before receiving the mortal blow of which he died. Then having finished his earthly duties, we may believe and hope,

that his emancipated spirit experienced the truth of that faith in which he had a short time previously said, " Let me die when it shall please God ! I am sure I shall go to the mansions of eternal glory, and enjoy my God and my Redeemer in heaven for ever."

A portrait is here of George the Second, who seems intending to be dignified, but looks as if he were beginning a minuet ; and the first Earl and Countess of Fife are represented in robes, as if walking at a coronation. The Admirable Crichton makes a noble appearance in the crowd, —that hero possessing almost fabulous gifts and accomplishments, who was treacherously assassinated at the age of twenty-two, by his pupil, the Duke of Medina's profligate son. There is a wonderful intensity of expression, like life itself, in all the portraits of this remarkable being, and his conversation was so brilliant and captivating that people held in their breath when he spoke.

The Constable of Bourbon's is an interesting portrait ; and Lord Chesterfield is here, looking polite even on canvas.

If I might assume the appearance of any one

I chose, you would see me return with the countenance of Mrs. Abingdon, who is represented archly glancing out from behind a curtain, with so animated an expression, and such a glow of youth and loveliness, that it would enliven any one to look at her. Even the great moralist Dr. Johnson found this lady irresistibly fascinating, and when rallied by a daring friend for having gone to the theatre once when she acted, he replied, "When the public cares the thousandth part for you that it does for her, I will go to your benefit too!" Madame de Montespan's portrait might be an imaginary houri in paradise, it is of such unearthly beauty, but without a spark of intellect, and not at all likely to have captivated Lavater.

Two peeresses might dispute the palm here of personal pre-eminence. The notorious Duchess of Cleveland, full length, in blue velvet, and the late Duchess of Gordon, wearing her robes of state, and looking like majesty personified. I could write on for ever about this gallery, which might comprise a history of all mankind, and womankind also, but you will begin to complain

that my letter is all velvet gowns and damask curtains.

" Lastly, and to conclude," as clergymen say in their sermons, we observed a portrait in Raeburn's best style, of Lord Fife himself, wearing his undress military uniform, when he commanded the Inverness-shire militia, and so like that any old soldier in passing must have saluted.——But an extinguisher has fallen over my paper, and it is time to cut myself short, though that is scarcely possible now, after covering nearly a yard and a half of letter paper. You have seen the sympathetic ink which becomes visible only when held to the fire, but I wish mine may disappear as soon as you begin to think me " dull, stale, flat, or unprofitable." As people say that a letter should be a sort of family newspaper, you may now consider my name as recorded among the fashionable departures from Banff.

FYVIE.

Now planning much, now changing what we plann'd,
Pleased by each trial, not by failures vexed,
And ever certain to succeed the next;
Quick to resolve, and easy to persuade ——.

CRABBE.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—If you ever wish to study "the greatest happiness principle," make a tour in the Highlands, and be not over particular about accommodation, for the instant travellers become too anxious about comfort, all comfort is at an end, and I care little for the vicissitudes of carpets or no carpets, arm-chairs or three-legged stools, as long as everything is clean, and we get no practical illustrations in our sleeping apartments of entomology,—or *damp*-ology, the greatest bugbear of all on a journey.

Without meaning a disrespectful thought of any other county, I must say there are none superior to Aberdeenshire for interest and grandeur, both natural and architectural. Fyvie Castle, built in the time of Robert Bruce, being considered one of the most extensive, picturesque, and ancient edifices in Scotland. A—— resolved, *coute qui coute*, to take a glimpse of it, little anticipating what the cost would be, for it turned out an adventure of first rate annoyance and difficulty, but "all is well that ends well." A stage-coach passes daily within half a mile of the little village of Fyvie, about dinner-time, so we resolved to be dropped there one morning, and to be picked up the next, thus allowing time to scrutinize the Castle before proceeding to Aberdeen.

After making a good start from Banff, there came on such a down-pour of rain, that it was quite a natural curiosity for heaviness, and continued to fall with unremitting diligence till night. In short, it was what Matthews described as "a dreepin' wat day," and when we paused at the turnpike to alight, I could not but hesitate about being drowned altogether in

attempting to gain a glimpse at Fyvie Castle. The road seemed one unfathomable depth of mud, and we had half a mile to wade before reaching the inn! No rational being would have attempted it, but I had seen a most eccentric looking porter's lodge, which excited my unbounded curiosity, as a sample of what might be seen, and several persons strongly recommended us not to be easily discouraged, and made light of the distance—made still lighter of the rain, and when I enquired what sort of inn we were likely to find at Fyvie, a factor who lived near, protested it was "clean and tidy, though not very large." All this sounded exceedingly plausible, till I discovered, on alighting, that this personage, who had been shivering outside, wished to fill up our vacant seats within, and hurried off, wishing us "a pleasant evening!"

After a most fatiguing promenade beneath a perfect cascade of rain, we reached the village, and looked about in vain for any sign, or signs to indicate the Royal Hotel of Fyvie. No "Red Lion," or "Blue Goat," or "Aberdeen Arms" could be seen, but I was at last directed to a

small cottage, looking like the wing of an adjoining grocer's shop. Here we found the landlady drinking tea, and surrounded by a numerous family of untidy children, and the whole party seemed to be struck speechless with consternation at the unwonted apparition of travellers. Chaucer tells us, the Queen of the Fairies once positively promised, that no woman should ever, on any occasion, be at a loss for an answer, but her majesty was faithless on this occasion, as none seemed to suggest itself now, when we requested the worthy hostess to provide us with rooms, and, indeed, the case at first wore a most unpromising aspect. The only suit of apartments in her house consisted of one sitting-room, containing a sort of contrivance which called itself a bed, and across the passage was a closet, about six feet square, with a borrowed light, and containing a small sofa-bed, into which a traveller, whatever his dimensions might be, must contrive, like a soldier forcing on regimental shoes, to fit himself, whether they fit or not.

Even these apartments it would have been too much happiness to find disengaged, but a

stranger had arrived some hours before, and secured the parlour-of-all-work, where he was now drinking tea! What an idea of unspeakable luxury and comfort it gave me at this moment to hear of any one in the full enjoyment of a fire and a cup of hot tea! I never knew their value before!

You are acquainted with a gentleman who locked his door, and pretended to be asleep one night at an inn, when he saw a party of ladies arrive, who could not, he was aware, be accommodated, and for whom he had determined not to discompose himself, but Mr. Menzies, the fortunate occupant of the first and only floor at Fyvie, was quite of a different school, and having accidentally heard of our arrival, he, with the most chivalrous politeness, insisted on relinquishing the whole house, and hurried off in the rain, saying he could depend upon being welcome at the clergyman's hospitable manse. where he intended now to remain.

We had scarcely time to express our thanks before he vanished, leaving not a trace behind. and we proceeded without loss of time, to ex-

amine into the capabilities of the larder at Fyvie, where the bill of fare for dinner being a total blank, we found it would be imprudent to quarrel with our bread and butter, and sat down with the best of all appetites to tea. You know of one gentleman who lets an inn near his moors, on condition that the landlord shall make it too uncomfortable for any traveller or sportsman to think of remaining there; and I can bear testimony in favour of the worthy host there, that for breakfast we had tea without cream, salt butter, oatcakes, and porridge, but if there be ever a vacancy in the management of that concern, I could recommend a very efficient successor not a hundred miles from Fyvie.

We were in the act of laughing over all our discomforts, when the door opened, and our good genius Mr. Menzies appeared, accompanied by the parish clergyman, who, the moment he heard of our predicament, had "cloaked, umbrella'd," and hurried over to us with so cordial an invitation to his fire-side, that before half an hour elapsed, we were comfortably domesticated with our reverend friend and his sister,

in their pretty little sitting-room, leaving to Mr. Menzies the luxurious accommodation of the inn.

This evening passed away most enchantingly, though my happiness was rather impaired by one very teasing perplexity. No imaginable device could enable me to discover the name of our very hospitable host! I clandestinely examined the title-pages of two Bibles on the table, thinking his designation must be inscribed there, but the only information conveyed I knew already, as the inscription was, "Manse of Fyvie!" The silver forks and spoons at supper were equally uncommunicative; I could not see the cover of an old letter in any quarter to assist me! In short, my ingenuity was balked on every side, till next morning, when it accidentally occurred to me, that I had not yet examined the corner of a towel, on which, to my great relief, I discovered the name of our friend and benefactor, Mr. Manson, which we shall certainly not forget, connected as it is with the recollection of such a deliverance, followed by so agreeable an evening.

Dr. Patterson, author of "The Manse Gar-

den," might see his book reduced to practice here, where the flower-beds are in brilliant order, and the vegetables fit to gain the prize at any competition. The perfection of order around this "glebe," is said to be quite in harmony with the good order of a whole parish under similar superintendence, for in everything belonging to any individual, we generally trace the same spirit of activity or of indolence, and I have often observed, that as a straw tells how the wind blows, even the aspect of a gentleman's lodge may be considered a tolerably fair criterion of how the whole estate is managed. The concerns of others are not likely to meet with the best attention from any one who is lazy about his own, or who must use, on mere temporal affairs, the melancholy language of Scripture, "Mine own vineyard have I not kept!" but in this small district we found three schools in admirable order, which were inspected by Mr. Menzies, the trustee appointed to examine the three counties in which Mr. Dick's legacy to schoolmasters must be distributed, and who reported them all to be extremely efficient.

I crossed the village churchyard, through a

wilderness of wet grass, and sheltered by an umbrella, to visit the grave-stone, adorned with hour-glasses and skulls, of Annie Smith, a miller's daughter, who was heroine of that much esteemed old ballad, "Tifty's Annie." This young lady, having been admired by the Laird of Fyvie, who offered to marry her, she unfortunately preferred the trumpeter of the Castle, and perseveringly discouraged his master's suit. Her brother, after vainly endeavouring to extinguish her disinterested preference of this long-winded lover, at last became so furiously irritated, that, in a paroxysm of rage, he struck her violently. The fair Annie, being of very sensitive feelings, never recovered the shock, but pined away and died. During her last moments, she entreated to be turned towards the tower of Fyvie Castle, where her favoured lover was usually to be seen blowing his trumpet; and after his decease, the generous Laird of Fyvie himself erected a leaden image of his more successful rival, which is now conspicuously to be seen blowing his trumpet towards the mill of Tifty, and thus commemorating that melancholy tragedy. The old ballad is extremely interesting.

and several of the verses show off the aristocratic lover to immense advantage.

> " Her father struck her wondrous sore,
> As also did her mother;
> Her sisters always did her scorn;
> But woe be to her brother.
>
> Lord Fyvie he did wring his hands,
> Said, ' Alas! for Tiftie's Annie,'
> The fairest flow'r's cut down by love,
> That e'er sprung up in Fyvie.
>
> O woe betide Mill o' Tiftie's pride,
> He might have let them marry;
> I should have giv'n them both to live
> Into the lands of Fyvie.
>
> Ye parents grave, who children have,
> In crushing them be canny,
> Lest when too late you do repent,—
> Remember Tiftie's Annie."

In the same churchyard we saw a beautifully sculptured monument to the Honourable General Gordon, representing a phœnix rising out of the flames, which might have been considered a fine Christian emblem, but I was disappointed to observe only an inscription from Ovid in Latin. Our sympathy with the dead is only perpetuated

when we find a record of that Christian faith and hope, which must ultimately bring all who really felt it, into one happy and everlasting home, but a heathen poem, beautiful as it may be, speaks of nothing beyond the grave, and is, therefore, unsuitable on a tomb-stone, that solemn memento, closing over all the earthly concerns of a mortal being, and intimating, whether in the language of Scripture or not, that his spirit has been summoned into the awful presence of our eternal Creator.

Next morning we laid siege to Fyvie Castle, which looks like the Methusalem of old houses, and ought to be placed in the Antiquarian Museum. The gate is a perfect cluster of steeples, and the same pointed towers adorn the edifice itself, each surmounted on its lofty pinnacle by fantastic leaden figures, placed in every variety of attitude. They give it somewhat the look of a magician's enchanted dwelling, where the prisoners have been turned into stone, and I suppose any daring knight who can blow a blast on the trumpet of Tifty's Annie's lover, will see the whole crumble into powder.

Large as this magnificent old castle is, a per-

fect romance in stone and mortar, the more ancient half was taken down some years ago, having become ruinous, and threatening a downfall. The entrance, through a wall nine feet thick, is defended by an outside door, studded with massy knobs of iron, and within that powerful defence stands a cross-barred gate of singular construction, so complicated in workmanship, that the neighbouring blacksmith confessed he could not divine how it was manufactured. We hazarded about six guesses, which were all proved to be wrong; and as no one living is in the secret, I "gave it up!" In the lower part of the south-western tower, there is said to be an arched room which, having neither door nor window, is totally inaccessible; but under such circumstances there can only be a conjectural knowledge of its existence at all.

What was formerly the prison at Fyvie Castle is now metamorphosed into the wine cellar, where people must be locked out, instead of being locked in. We were not, of course, made free of the cellar, but I became greatly interested in seeing the fire-proof charter-room, quite an appalling dungeon, entirely lined with

iron. A second closet within was exhibited, the iron door of which requires the strength of two persons to open; and when the housekeeper desired me to walk in, I thought, with a shudder, of "The iron shroud," and of "The misletoe bough." If ever I am afflicted with a nightmare, I shall certainly fancy myself shut up by a spring-lock in that old dungeon at Fyvie Castle! Our cicerone observed, with some humour, in allusion to a certain very recent robbery, "This is a safer place than the bank at Aberdeen!"

In all my experience of housekeepers, which has not been small, I never met with one so shrewd and intelligent as the lady in waiting here. The Aberdeenshire people are noted in Scotland for being alarmingly clever, very much as the Yorkshiremen are in England, therefore, I supposed at first, that our mistress of the ceremonies might be considered, perhaps, at the ordinary average of Aberdeen talent; but we were afterwards told, that her case is peculiar, even in that neighbourhood. If ever we hurried past anything worthy of notice, she eagerly summoned us back, repeatedly begged me to be

more at leisure, and when I admired a quantity of beautiful coloured silk embroidery, adorned with flowers, which actually beat nature out and out, done by the Countess of Aberdeen, remarking, at the same time, that ladies were scarcely so industrious in the present day, she complaisently replied, that "ladies now have many better occupations."

When our visit drew towards a close, the good woman insisted beyond measure, that we should accept a glass of wine! a flight of fancy quite beyond the imagination of any ordinary housekeeper; and though we positively declined the offer, yet I very gladly availed myself of a pressing invitation to inspect her own room. Here the walls were hung round with a perfect General Assembly of clergymen, as large as life, dressed in their full canonicals, and positively you have often paid your shilling for seeing a worse exhibition. It was pleasing to behold so numerous a collection of Scottish worthies, though in general I admire the principle expressed by a Swiss clergyman, who declined sitting for his portrait, even at the earnest request of an attached congregation, on

the ground of that text, "We preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ the Lord." Owing to the affectionate partiality of many parishioners, we see in almost every exhibition of pictures a large proportion of clergymen,—then follows the advertisement of a print, price L.1, 1s.—and some years afterwards appears a posthumous memoir and frontispiece, edited by the son or nephew, who feels called upon to publish a "private diary," professedly intended for no eye but those of the writer and his own children. It is a great pity that persons who write such very confidential documents never seem to hit on the only sure plan of keeping them private, which can be very easily accomplished by the application of a taper, or by a short cut into the fire-place. Nothing should be more avoided, by those who profess Christian integrity, than to record thoughts and actions, under pretext that they shall remain unseen and unknown, when all the time a consciousness is felt, that the whole world shall hereafter be invited to peep over the author's shoulder, and read what has been said. The first attempt we find in the line of public privacy, was made by Horace

Walpole, in his entertaining letters, and since his time, those who stood the very highest for talent, and even for piety, have not disdained to wear the same flimsy veil, avoiding the responsibility of their own act, by throwing the blame upon survivors, and, as Dr. Johnson said, leaving a loaded gun behind them, which they have the inclination but not the courage to fire.

The broad fine staircase at Fyvie Castle is considered quite unique, and might be a study for any architect. It is ornamented with armorial bearings, and built in a succession of lofty arches, all placed at right angles, each flight of steps forming an arch over the flight beneath, so that we seemed to be ascending a pyramid of tunnels, caves, or bridges, all carved in nearly solid stone. The effect is most singular.

It has been unhandsomely alleged, that tartan was first invented by the poor of Scotland, who could find nothing but rags of various colours to clothe themselves in; and it has also been conjectured, that a clan-tartan is like a coat of arms, different colours being peculiar to different families, so that those who were allied to the Stuarts adopted a stripe of red, and

when they intermarried with the Bruces, a stripe of black was added; but all these assertions seem fabulous. Tartan is not supposed to be a very ancient manufacture, as none is to be seen on the oldest pictures. The Gordon plaid is one of the handsomest, and makes admirable furniture in some of the rooms here, enlivened by the family badge of a thistle on every chair. I like heraldic furniture, with as many coronets, crests, and quarterings as can be reasonably introduced, and quite admired the King of Wirtemberg for mounting regal crowns on his birds' cages.

Every genuine Highland clan wears some peculiar plant as a badge of distinction; and you should always see the Macdonalds, on state occasions, mount a sprig of heather, the Macgregors carrying the pine, the Grahams and Gordons with a thistle, the Sinclairs living upon clover, and the Buchanans still armed with a birch rod, which they adopted, I suppose, in commemoration of King James' tutor.

Fyvie Castle changed proprietors frequently in former days. Originally the property of Sir Henry Preston, one of the many lowlanders whom Robert Bruce transplanted to this neigh-

bourhood, it afterwards escaped to the Meldrum family, and then settled for some time in possession of the Chancellor, Earl of Dunfermline, whose arms are sculptured on the Castle in every direction, inside and out, with full length inscriptions to commemorate his reign. This estate was finally purchased by the present proprietor's grandfather, Lord Aberdeen, when he married for his second wife the Duke of Gordon's daughter, and the property was given to her eldest son, General Gordon, whose portrait we greatly admired, being one of the best visible in this house, or perhaps in any other. The frame is hung round with the standards of his regiment, festooned in loose draperies, which add greatly to the effect of his handsome uniform, and fine military aspect. He is equipped in full Highland garb, his plaid streaming in the wind, his cap raised in his hand, and his broad-sword extended in the air. Nothing can be more spirited and striking! This fine picture seems meant to illustrate the family motto, "Follow Fortune." The General has evidently kicked down the Coliseum in passing, for it lies in ruins behind him, and he is rapidly ascending over broken

pillars, cornices, and columns, to where Fortune sits aloft, ready to crown him with her choicest gifts, among which we must acknowledge, that Fyvie Castle was not the least!

You would be in ecstacies with the park, varied by a river, a lake, a forest of noble trees, and flocks of sheep, which seem to understand the picturesque, they scatter themselves so judiciously over the sloping banks, and, in short, the only fault that can be invented for this never-to-be-enough-admired place is, its being so outrageously difficult to reach.

During our journey from Fyvie to Aberdeen, we saw several stony fields, most of which have now been improved into fertility, at a vast expenditure of labour, while others being perfectly paved across, no labour could improve. You might fancy in some parts of this country, that it rained stones instead of water! and towards the west, where rocks abound most, the superfluous stones are swallowed up in what is called an "Aberdeenshire dyke," built about six feet high, and twenty or thirty feet broad, fit for a waggon to be driven on, and looking as if mate-

rials had been collected for erecting a village. The operation of extracting these rocks from the ground, is like drawing teeth out of their sockets, but after inflicting so painful a process, the agriculturist must have more than common pleasure, in seeing the best entertainment for man and horse, turnips, wheat, oats, and barley, all flourishing around him.

In Aberdeenshire, the enthusiasm lasted longer than in any other county for Charles Edward's family. The gardener at Lord Saltoun's proved so staunch to the cause, that when some officers on the Protestant side were visiting his master, a bet was laid that nothing could induce him to drink King George's health. Accordingly he was sent for, and the senior captain making him a handsome present, said he had heard much of his high character, and proposed that they should unite in pledging a bumper to King George's health. The sturdy Jacobite raised his glass and drank it off, saying emphatically, "Here's to our rightfu' and lawfu' King!" The Captain started up in a rage, saying, "Why, you rascal! that's not King

George!" To which the other slyly replied, with a nod, "I'm vera muckle o' your way o' thinking, Sir!"

Dr. Johnson remarks, "it seems like frivolous ostentation to write a solemn geographical description of any city in our own island, as if we had been cast on some newly discovered coast." Here we are now at Aberdeen, the Oxford of Scotland, where, during many centuries past, whenever strangers pre-eminent for rank or learning arrived, the magistrates called in procession, and presented them with a bumper of wine in the ancient and illustrious "Cup of Bon Accord," but either the custom is now discontinued, or they have not yet heard of our arrival!! This town is equally celebrated for its haddocks and its professors, both being incomparably excellent in their line, and having long enjoyed great and deserved popularity. Diplomas are not given so promiscuously here as formerly; but I once knew three English schoolmasters who had been created doctors at Aberdeen; and Dr. Johnson said of one Scotch university, that it had got rich "by Degrees." My late father, who, besides receiving diplomas

from twenty-five foreign societies, was member of almost every literary and scientific institution at home, once received a humorous letter from his old cotemporary, Sir Adam Fergusson, directed to him as usual, and then followed, "A.M.—F.R.S.—TUVWXYZ."

In the college here may be seen the most terrifying portraits of our 106 Scottish monarchs, from a period cotemporary with the time of Abraham, to the present day, the whole succession being painted, I believe, by one artist, who should have been hung instead of his pictures.

Mackray's hotel would be a perfect paragon of comfort, were it not for a set of noisy travellers recently arrived, who never tire of ringing the bells, so we have a merry peal from morning till night, and all night besides. Those who are least accustomed to have servants at command, become most arbitrary at an inn, and like to agitate the waiters, who are flying about the house like lamplighters to-night, and have burst into our quiet room several times by mistake in the hurry of hearing so many conflicting bells. You have not probably forgotten the old

housekeeper who used to tell us formerly, that she had saved money all her life in order to be a lady for one week, and the chief part of her projected dignity seemed to consist in arriving at a hotel, dressed in a silk gown, and in ringing for the waiters as often as she pleased! I have never since observed people particularly severe on the bell-ropes, without thinking that they must have as short an allowance of consequence and authority.

Being informed on Sunday, that Bishop Skinner intended to preach at the Episcopal Chapel, I went to hear him, but was shocked on entering, to behold, near the door, a fine full-length monumental statue in white marble, by Flaxman, bearing the solemn inscription, "SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF BISHOP SKINNER!" I stood petrified with astonishment at this very sudden catastrophe! How could it have escaped the waiters, who had all combined in assuring me he was to preach! Not many minutes afterwards, however, a clergyman, exactly resembling the marble image, stood face to face before it, gravely taking his station in the reading-desk, and commenced divine service, but it was not till the whole

had been concluded that the mystery was cleared up. I then ascertained, that the episcopal dignity has continued hereditary in the same family for two generations, and that the venerable father of the present Bishop is commemorated by this monument. The surprise was as great to me, but not quite so unpleasant, as that of a gentleman who lately observed a beautiful macaw sitting so immoveably on a pole, that, never doubting the bird was stuffed, he walked close up, to examine the plumage, and only discovered his mistake, when it seized him by the nose.

Aberdeen has always testified peculiar partiality for the Episcopalian church, and the inhabitants have recently erected a very handsome chapel, which cost L.6000, with a painted glass window, copied from Carlo Dolci's picture of our Saviour blessing the sacred symbols. In the Rev. Edward Ramsay's very interesting sermon on behalf of the Scottish Episcopal Church Society, we find a picture drawn of clerical poverty and privation, not to be imagined or believed without such testimony as he brings. One clergyman in the north derives at present, from two congregations, an income of only L.30, an-

other receives only L.20 per annum, a third announces his professional income to be L.2, another had a living, if it could be called a living, of L.12, and the last I shall mention was starving on L.6!! Some of these worthy divines have congregations sufficiently wealthy, but I have generally observed, that the two professions to which we owe the deepest obligations are those that people feel most unwilling to remunerate, the doctor and the clergyman.

In one church at Aberdeen, we heard the most distorted attempt at English ever promulgated from a pulpit. It was very little easier to understand than if the preacher had been speaking on the plan recommended by an Irishman to a Highlander who addressed him in Gaelic, "Can't you turn your tongue the other way, and spake English!" Not a single vowel got fair play on this occasion, for Scotchmen who wish to be peculiarly correct, generally omit them entirely; and the prepositions, which puzzle our northern grammarians more than can be conceived, were all on duty in the wrong place. If public speakers would only deal in plain, honest, broad Scotch, as the late Lord Melville

used to do, it becomes perfectly comprehensible even to a cockney, but the distorted dialects people invent for themselves to conceal a provincial accent, become, to most listeners, quite an unknown tongue.

Several streets in the venerable town of Aberdeen are exceedingly handsome, but being built of granite so very hard, that iron instruments are frequently broken in attempting to work it, the buildings are almost entirely without ornament, in what architects would probably term "a severe style." No trimmings are to be seen around the windows, which look as if they were merely patched on the surface of a bare wall,—no decorations or porticos over the doors, but high, naked-looking piles of stone arise on every side, of a cold blue-ish white, which it chills one to look at. How different from the rich warm tint, like *oiseau de paradis*, on the free-stone of Elgin; yet certainly Union Street is undeniably magnificent, and the bridge of a single arch stupendous.

The late M.P. for this county, Mr. Fergusson of Pitfour, used to give the result of his Parliamentary experience in these words, which

would astonish statesmen of the present day, who are all, we hope, so very different—"I have "represented Aberdeenshire for half a century, "during which, I never was present at a debate "I could avoid, nor absent from a division I "could get to. I have heard many speeches "that convinced my judgment, but none that "ever influenced my vote. I once, and only "once, voted on my own opinion, but that was "the most erroneous vote I ever gave. He "who would be easy in Parliament, must al-"ways support administration, but never take "office."

Fourteen miles south of Aberdeen may be found the picturesque and extensive ruin of Dunottar Castle, seat of the Keiths, Earls Marischal of Scotland, whose origin is so lost in antiquity, that they are conjectured to have been Princes of the Catti in Germany, before the Bourbon or Austrian dynasties were heard of. The catastrophe of 1715 caused this ancient title to be forfeited; but the last Earl nobly represented his long line of ancestry, for he became the chosen and distinguished friend of Frederick the Great, and his brother, Marshal

Keith, need only be named, to recall the most chivalrous recollections of bravery and generalship. The Empress of Russia presented him with a sword valued at L.1500, as a small testimony of her esteem, and after a life of warlike achievements, he died victoriously on the field of battle. These were two of the most distinguished brothers Scotland ever produced. The site of Dunottar Castle is in the ocean, perched on a high peninsula, nearly the whole of which is covered by the walls, which surround a spacious court.

A gentleman once remarked of a dull visitor, "what a pity he is not ill-natured, as that would be an excuse for turning him out of the room;" and you may probably begin to think, if this rather dry letter goes on much longer, that, spiced with a little peevishness, it might be quite fit for the fire; so leaving you to make the best of it, as you always do of everything, I remain—at Aberdeen, as much as any where else—your affectionate cousin.

CASTLE FRASER.

Lady Percy. "What is it carries you away?"
Hotspur. "Why! a horse, madam, a horse."

My dear Cousin,—It occurs to me at this moment, as being curious, in how many different things people can be identified. When present by their features, when absent by their voices, and even, when out of both sight and hearing, by their handwriting. All are so peculiar to the individual, that I begin to think the collecting of autographs a perfectly respectable pursuit, as they certainly give some insight into character; therefore, next time you write to me, take your best pen, in case of appearing in my album. I suppose the Duke of Wellington and O'Connell never accept an invitation to dinner,

or are sorry that a previous engagement prevents them, without imminent danger of their being afterwards carefully embalmed on a folio sheet of paper, beside specimens of scribbling from Grace Darling, Joseph Hume, Dr. Chalmers, Lady Blessington, Lockhart, Wilson, Captain Hall, Hannah More, Wilberforce, Mrs. Couch, and the whole Bench of Bishops!

I never could have guessed half the annoyance endured in society by the race of lions, unless I had happened often to see Sir Walter Scott suffering under it, who would frequently have been thankful to put on a domino, or to adopt invisibility, as every body pricked forward their ears if he merely asked what o'clock it was, and ceased to breathe when he made a remark on the weather.

After leaving Aberdeen, we proceeded, in our usual touch-and-go style of travelling, through the charming valley of Strathdon, to inspect a large assortment of castles, new, old, and middle-aged, which embellish the rivers Dee and Don, two rival streams, the comparative merits of which are keenly disputed by lovers of the picturesque; and as I actually do not claim to be

a perfectly infallible judge on these subjects, you shall have the impartial verdict of a poet, who thinks he has settled the point by an elegant couplet:

> "One foot of Don's worth two of Dee,
> "Except it be for fish and tree."

Among the best remaining specimens of old Scottish fortresses, we admired none more than Castle Fraser, which seems in perfect preservation, with a curious old French court behind, and possessing a noble round tower, nearly a hundred feet high, quite a model of ancient architecture, being surrounded by handsome balustrades, and defended by stone cannon. I had unluckily obtained false information respecting this place, being assured that no access could possibly be obtained to see it, and an exaggerated representation was drawn, of its having been fortified inaccessibly against the intrusion of idle curiosity. I merely ventured, therefore, to station our carriage as a *corps de reserve* at the gate, and with A—— for an advanced guard, stole upon tip-toe along the approach, concealed myself in an ambuscade behind a large plane tree, and from thence took

a hasty survey of the premises. After having counted the windows, estimated the height of the towers, guessed the thickness of the walls, admired the curious gable-headed windows, wondered at the number of projecting little turrets, and ascertained for certain, that the castle is a very great deal larger at the top than at the foundation, my curiosity having been rather increased than satiated, I took courage, and asked a servant boy in livery, who was passing towards the castle, whether we could possibly see the house, but he appeared panic-struck at the sight of strangers, stared as if we had been apparitions, and suddenly absconded at full speed! A—— was amused beyond measure, but this catastrophe completely intimidated me, and I slowly retreated in good order, almost expecting the cannons to fire upon us.

The country round this neighbourhood exhibits infallible symptoms of resident proprietors, the fields being all thoroughly drained, hedged, planted, cultivated, and presenting a general aspect of prosperity. Our drive was delicious, till we reached the splendid modern,

spic-and-span-new castle recently built by Mr. Gordon of Cluny. It is still quite damp from the press, and will not be habitable for some months. The plan is designed by a young unprofessional artist, who, wonderful to relate, omitted neither door, window, nor stair-case, and has been altogether so successful, that he deserves three rounds of applause. The granite is so very hard, that it would almost need to be cut with a diamond, but after years of laborious chiselling, a magnificent front of exquisite masonry has been completed, though, I daresay, to calculate the expense might puzzle Cocker himself.

I must now give you a "graphic sketch," painted expressly for the occasion, of this extensive building. The style is very peculiar, and must belong, I should guess, to no particular order, and to the class *specio-cissima*. A high circular tower at one end, four stories high, is surmounted by a square ditto three stories higher, which seems to have grown out of the other, and which is curiously flanked at the summit by a pointed turret, stuck on apparently by accident. This lofty pile is a grand extravaganza in stone, reaching nearer the

moon than any modern tower I know, while the main body of this edifice abounds in cheerful, airy, well-proportioned rooms. The castle wants nothing now but good fires, furniture, and inhabitants.

The park displays abundance of grass, and is embellished with middle-aged trees, but has not a drop of water to show in the whole landscape, —not so much as a canal or a horse pond. Some of the ground lies so flat, as almost to defy draining, and after great expense incurred to improve the soil, Johnston the drainer was brought to inspect it, and questioned whether the ground did not now look "rather parkish?" to which he dryly answered, "No! it is rather lakish."

Next in this world of ancient feudal castles, we passed the snug, tidy, quaint-looking old place of Monymusk, better situated than most of the others, near the Don. Not far off, we admired the solemnly pleasing shades of a fine forest, rather whimsically named Paradise. The proprietor of this little fortress unfortunately took the key in his pocket, when he went to the Continent, so on our inquiring whether it might be

seen, a maid, who was sitting with closed doors, showed her profile through a small crevice, and gave us warning to quit. You see, therefore, the proverb is not always true, "*Chateau qui parle, et femme qui écoute, va se rendre!*"

The little village of Monymusk is quite a model of neatness, built in the form of a large square, with a grass common in the middle, enclosed by a fence of rough stakes, and by a luxuriant inner hedge of thorn. Here many of the villagers were strolling about with a look of cheerful indolent leisure, as if they had worked enough for the day, and felt entitled now to be happy. Nearly all the common people in Scotland walk with their hands in their pockets,—better certainly than in any other person's—but it gives them an anxious forlorn appearance, as if in chase of their last shilling.

The Priory here has been handsome, and still preserves some remains of grandeur, though six hundred years old. The ancient Saxon arches at each end are entire, and look as if they might last six hundred years more; or perhaps as long as the earth continues spinning on her axle.

The small inn-parlour at Monymusk is deco-

rated with a little fancy print which, though the subject be melancholy, might make the gravest person smile. It represents Prince Leopold and Britannia mourning at the tomb of Princess Charlotte—he, appropriately costumed in a flowing black tragedy-cloak, the very image of a second-rate actor, and she, weeping in a rose-coloured dress, yellow body, and pink feathers, over an urn, very like the glass globe in an apothecary's shop, or as if she were in the last agonies of sea-sickness. The very lion at her feet seems wiping his eyes with his paw, looking more like a lion in distress than anything I ever witnessed before.

We passed Pitfichy, a ruin which belonged to the family of the well known General Hurry, of the Parliamentary army, and Tillyfour, which was, I hope, in better repair when Queen Mary inhabited it for one night only, and by particular desire. Our carriage wheels then turned themselves towards Castle Forbes, belonging to the premier Baron of Scotland. This is a finely situated modern house, exhibiting, of course, a majestic round tower, which is quite the newest fashion in building. The opposite tower is square.

Formal and regular plans are now quite out, and everything in the free-and-easy style of architecture, with as few of the windows, doors, or turrets to match as possible. We admired this place exceedingly, and the Castle has a beautiful effect in the distance, peeping out through a mass of wood, about half-way up the bank, as if it had stopped in ascending, to take a look of the country, and remained stationary to admire it for ever. No wonder! The Don flows gracefully through a gay panorama of plantations, castles, farms, and distant hills, a correct inventory of which would fill the rest of my paper.

You must one day visit the seven tall towers of Kildrummy Castle, formerly considered impregnable, but which a sparrow now may take possession of. They were built by St. Gilbert, in the twelfth century, and all enterprising tourists should positively make a digression off the road, to ascend the dark ghosty-looking stairs, and to fight many battles over again on the spot which once steeped those walls in the blood of heroes. Every stone has had its adventures; but Kildrummy Castle was finally betrayed to the English army by a blacksmith, bribed to this

treachery with the promise of as much gold as he could carry. In pursuance of his engagement, he threw a red hot bar into the hayloft, which set the Castle on fire, and during the consequent confusion, it was taken, but the mercenary traitor suffered a frightful punishment from his own recent allies, who, detesting his crime, kept their promise in a literal sense, by pouring melted gold down his throat! Our old Scotch proverb truly says, "better a little fire that warms, than mickle that burns."

I am now about to adopt a grand historical tone, and to tell you a little more, for even if you know my tale already, yet, like Sir Christopher Hutton in the Critic, you will be the better of hearing it all over again.

Kildrummy Castle, formerly the chief seat of the powerful Earls of Mar, always distinguished itself greatly in Scottish history. When Robert Bruce first asserted his claims to the crown, and met with reverses, he lodged his Queen and daughter here, under charge of his brother Sir Niel. Being threatened with a siege, the ladies fled to a sanctuary, where they were betrayed by the Earl of Ross; and after a brave defence for

some time, they were only captured through the treachery of Osburn, an Englishman, who blew up the powder magazine. Thus the ladies had only saved themselves from Scylla, and plunged into Charybdis, or, to use a vulgar phrase, they were "out of the frying-pan into the fire." By the way, Hume or Alison would blot such an expression out of their pages, and I wish at present to be quite upon their model, so try to forget it.

Kildrummy Castle was again beleaguered in 1335, when the misfortunes of David Bruce had left this kingdom, during three years, in the hands of Edward Baliol and his partizans. It held out bravely against the Earl of Athol, who being surprised by a very inferior force, and killed, in the forest of Kilblain, the tide of fortune turned, and swept away the whole English party from the entire kingdom of Scotland, which now, as on all occasions, proved unconquerable.

The third siege in 1404 is quite romantic, when it was assailed by a band of robbers, commanded by Alexander Stewart, natural son of that notorious character, infamous in our Scottish annals, "The Wolf of Badenoch," whose

real title was Earl of Buchan, being third son of King Robert the Second. Though he burned and robbed Elgin Cathedral, ill treated his wife, a Countess in her own right, and distinguished himself by every species of atrocity, yet on his tomb-stone in Dunkeld Cathedral, we find him complaisantly stated to be "of good memory!" How different will be the record kept on earth, from that which shall be heard at an eternal tribunal!

The adventurous young freebooter and his gang attacked Kildrummy Castle when it was occupied by the hereditary Countess of Mar in her own right, then a widow. He stormed it, gained possession, made a mockery of delivering up the keys and papers into her own hand at the gate, and finally obliged her to declare that she voluntarily took him as her husband, for better or worse,—indeed he could hardly be worse. The successful adventurer now styled himself Earl of Mar, and became, as times go, quite a respectable man! He was ambassador "extraordinary!" to England, fought in a tournament with the Earl of Kent, commanded a Scottish army against the Lord of the Isles at

Harlow, was generalissimo to the Duke of Burgundy in support of the Bishop of Liege, and retaining the Earldom, though his wife died without children, he finally married Lady Duffyl an heiress in Brabant.

We caught, in passing, a distant glimpse of Craigievar, a singular old Castle, the lower-half being a plain square tower entirely without ornament, and so narrow, you might suppose it had worn a strait-waistcoat, but above it juts out on all sides, in a strange, any-how-fashion, with little gable-ends, little turrets, and little windows, as if a whole village had scrambled up and clustered on the roof. Supreme above all, waved a large showy banner, which the post-boy with an approving nod, pointed out, informing me it was "A Reform flag, and had never been taken down since the passing of the bill!" The ancestor of this family obtained his baronetage from King Charles, against whom he soon afterwards took arms. In an old ballad of those times, describing the death of "Bonny John Seton, a baron bold," in memory of whom the family still bear on their shield a heart dropping

blood, we find these lines, showing what mixed motives often dictate extreme measures:

> "Oh, spoil him, spoil him! cried Craigievar,
> Him spoiled let me see;
> For on my word, said Craigievar,
> He bore no good will to me."

If you have a laudable curiosity to see Macbeth's cairn, he was decidedly killed near this, at Lumphanan, three miles beyond Kincardine O'Neil, and though most of the monumental pile was pilfered formerly to build cow-sheds and pig styes, yet enough still remains to identify the spot.

As Shakespeare says, "the property of rain is to wet;" so, as we were treated in the evening to a mixture of showers and wind, with a few scruples of Scotch mist, we first attempted a stoppage at the Bridge of Alford, but finding only a curtainless, carpetless, dingy apartment, pre-occupied by sportsmen for fishing, we merely snatched a chop, looked for the field where the battle of Alford was fought, and where Lord Huntly's eldest son was killed, and then proceeded, by the beautiful banks of the Don, to

this little perfection of a Highland farm-inn at Kincardine O'Neil, kept by a cordial, hearty, old landlady, who would have served me up three courses at tea, if I had not barricadoed the table against anything more. After bringing up six kinds of tea-bread, eggs, and marmalade, she made a desperate attempt to force a dish of chops or chickens upon us, but I would not hear of so much as a biscuit being added to the liberal entertainment, having adopted the opinion of an old gentleman, who remarked, that supper is "an insult to dinner, and an injury to breakfast."

The landlady presented me next morning with a beautiful bouquet, containing all the best flowers in her garden, and though none were exotics, the good old native wall-flowers and thyme, with their fragrant perfume, come back like the familiar friends of by-gone days, and revive many "thoughts too deep for tears." Who does not remember the period when one little enclosure, frilled round with box-wood and flaunting with sun-flowers and daffodils, gave him more real joy than the gardens at Kew could do now if he had them; and as the simpler we

can keep our tastes, the more easy they are of indulgence, I would not exchange my partiality to honeysuckles, violets, and roses, for all the scentless rarities that ever adorned a greenhouse, directing their attractions to the eye and not to the heart.

It was in honour of our good old landlady, Mrs. Gordon, that these very beautiful lines were penned, containing an eloquent and deserved panegyric, written with so much taste and feeling, that we have scarcely yet decided whether the style resembles most that of Moore or Mrs. Hemans.

> Of all the hostleries so fair,
> Built for the traveller's dwelling,
> On Dee-side, far beyond compare,
> Kincardine is excelling.

LOCH-NA-GAR.

Years have roll'd on, Loch-na-gar, since I left you!
Years must elapse ere I tread you again,
Nature of verdure and flow'rs has bereft you,
Yet still are you dearer than Albion's plain.

England! thy beauties are tame and domestic,
To one who has rov'd on the mountains afar!
Oh! for the crags that are wild and majestic,
The steep frowning glories of dark Loch-na-gar.

BYRON.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—Here we are, in the scene of Lord Byron's early days, where, before "splendour had rais'd, but embittered his lot," he joyously ran over the lofty hills, without his hat, and where, again to use his own expression, he "clasp'd the mountain in his mind's embrace," a stretch of imagination certainly! Near the snow-covered summit of Morven, he imbibed

a taste for those cloud-capped mountains, thundering torrents, and pathless forests, which owe their subsequent celebrity to his pen, and you could not wonder here that Byron became a poet, but would be apt rather to wonder that every one is not.

We drove to-day through moors purple with heather, and sprinkled with birch, the pyramids of hills growing bolder as we advanced, and the beautiful Dee dancing beside us most of the time, while a magnificent confusion of mountains hemmed us in on every side, rock above rock, and one precipice looking over the head of another, in endless succession, some as bare as a turnpike road, and others crowded with trees to their highest pinnacles. Here we gained a momentary glimpse of Aboyne Castle, covered with a sheet of white-wash, a fine feudal-looking edifice, embosomed in fir trees, and rather shy of showing itself.

The inn at Ballater is charmingly situated at one end of a bridge, with the swiftly flowing river rushing along at the extremity of a neat little flower garden. This was quite a place to spend the summer at, instead of merely chang-

ing horses as we did. Here the sole, engrossing business of everybody's life seemed to be trout-fishing, and I pity every gentleman not fond of that fascinating sport, which becomes often an inexhaustible resource to the half-pay world, many of whom occupy their whole mornings in angling, and their evenings in dressing hooks. I like to see a hat like some we passed to-day, stuck over, inside and out, with flies, as if a bee-hive had swarmed on it. Many ladies in the Highlands wield the rod, though rather perhaps out of their element on such an occasion. I was amused to hear of a chieftain, accustomed only to angling, who arrived in a hunting country, where a kind neighbour, finding he had never before seen this sort of sport, gave him a mount on a spirited steed, which, of course, ran off with him, but as he flew past his friend at full career, vainly trying to hold in the reins, he was heard to exclaim, with a true Highland drawl, "I like fishing much better!"

I receive daily lessons against indulging an excessive partiality to open carriages, but it seems quite incurable. We discovered a most enticing little britchska to be hired at Ballater,

and, congratulating myself on such a piece of good fortune, I took possession, and proceeded the first three miles of our beautiful journey in the most unalloyed state of enjoyment, but gradually the mist hung in festoons almost down to the road, and at last came such a burst of rain that travellers must have been drenched before they could raise an umbrella. In this bold, romantic scene, it became most tantalizing not to know a cloud from a hill, but they must, indeed, at all times be near neighbours on very intimate terms.

Besides the grey precipices, hoarse waterfalls, towering hills, and inconceivable profusion of birch and fir trees, this noble scene displays another beauty which you would scarcely anticipate, being quite the kingdom of wild roses. We saw thousands by the road side,—a perfect army of red and white roses drawn up in battle array, and scattered all around in dazzling abundance. You perhaps fancy, I mean mere hedges, but there were wild uncultivated fields of them, giving so flushed and full-dressed an aspect to the landscape, that the road seemed ornamented for a gala, and several branches

had straggled so far across our path that I could almost have plucked them as we drove along. If you wish to know how a dress of green velvet and roses would look, nature certainly wears one here. As Bishop Horne remarked of a Christian's afflictions, "every thorn is accompanied by a flower!" Sometimes while contrasting the simple delight of living in a scene like this with the artificial enjoyments of a town career, I have thought the difference might be aptly illustrated by comparing the feelings of a wearied, haggard, and worn-out votary of dissipation, with faded looks and exhausted spirits, hurrying home from a ball-room at the dawn of day, and meeting the joyous school-boys and market girls, fresh from their country homes, with buoyant spirits and unimpaired health, untarnished by the heat, glare, and dust which have accompanied unnatural excitement. It is astonishing how many prefer gas light to sunshine itself, which, like the light of religion, cheers every moment of joy, interfering with no pleasure that deserves the name, and least of all with our interest and delight in contemplating the works of creation and providence.

Abergeldie Castle, which we passed, is a tall white house, like a spectre among the dark mountains, quite romantically beautiful in situation, and properly furnished with bartizans and turrets complete. Burns wrote a song on the "birks of Aberfeldie," but the great original birches were those of this place, which we now admired, and the more ancient ballad begins with an invitation which I would recommend every one to accept who admires a fascinating country,—

> Bonny lassie, will ye go
> To the birks o' Abergeldie?

The river Dee flows, broad, deep, and silent, beneath the walls of this old building, and the inhabitants being obliged to make a circuit of some miles for a bridge, have suspended a cradle here, from tree to tree, across the rapid stream, in which enterprising travellers may venture a flight on a slack rope in the same way as at Noss Head. Here the foundation is more secure than that of Shetland, where, in default of trees, large poles are merely stuck in the ground, but, nevertheless, I was truly glad not

to be going in that direction, because, after engaging to use whatever conveyances the country afforded, I should have been bound in honour to suspend myself here. The last accident which occurred on the swing-bridge was when a gamekeeper and dogs were emptied into the water, and had to swim for their lives; but a more tragical catastrophe took place several years ago. An excise officer having fallen in, crowds assembled, eager to rescue a fellow-creature in distress, but when the sufferer was unluckily recognized, they left him to his fate, exclaiming, "It's only the guager!" If a Highland jury had been summoned to the inquest, they would have been apt to return a verdict like that given lately on the trial of a man for violently beating his wife. When the jury reentered, after long deliberation, and the judge solemnly asked for their decision, it was unanimously delivered in these words, "Sarved her right!"

A bride and bridegroom once, when attempting to cross by this fantastic contrivance, on the day of their marriage, were precipitated into the rolling current, and perished. Such melancholy

and unexpected catastrophes bring to my mind sometimes the homely remark of a rural preacher, "Death is like a cow in a daisy-field, cropping here, and there, and everywhere, by turns!"

We next observed Balmorral, a beautiful place of Lord Fife's, who seems fortunate in a tenant, as we were told that it has been long occupied for shooting quarters by a sportsman, who adds a new wing or tower to the house almost every year, and gathers a perfect battu of excellent shots round the neighbourhood. If it be any consolation to die by noble hands, the whole House of Lords seemed in full progress here for the ensuing campaign, when the country will be fragrant with gunpowder, and resounding with shots. We saw one noble red-deer standing by the road side, and staring at us while we passed, as if he meant to "take down our number." He seemed to have no idea of making way for intruders in his native forests, and I am told these animals scarcely notice a carriage at any time, therefore the best way to shoot them would be to go out in one.

The next place on our muster-roll of houses

was Invercauld, which has for many centuries belonged to the ancestors of Mrs. Farquharson, the present chieftainess of that clan. Here magnificent forests clamber up the mountain sides, and stately old trees enrich the valley, which, surrounded by a ring of lofty pinnacles, can be compared to nothing but Sinbad's valley of diamonds, to which birds alone could find access. You would be quite perplexed to imagine how a carriage ever wound its way into this beautiful park, or is ever to get out again. Loch-na-gar rushes up with a fine sweep towards the sky, where it indents the very firmament above. The Lion's face is a noble craggy precipice, and another mountain opposite the house of Invercauld, displays flowers at the base and snow on the summit.

You can dream of nothing comparable to the effect by moonlight on Ben-y-bourd and Loch-na-gar, looking blacker than night, as if carved in ebony or jet, varied by solemn forests of fir, and the dark foaming current of the Dee. It was in this romantic district that a native, brought from the featureless flats of Buchan, was asked what he thought of the scenery,

when he remarked in a tone of diverting perplexity. "Oh! it's very fine *scainery*,—but its a' sc*a*inery together! nothing but scainery!—feint a flea but scainery!!"

We enjoyed a charming drive next morning, with Miss Farquharson, through several miles of natural forest, in which everything appeared wild and uncultivated, as if not a human being had ever interfered with the course of nature. Aged fir trees bristled against the sky, their furrowed gray stems looking as old as the mountains they covered, while clustered together for miles, their strange fantastic arms were thrown out in every curious contortion that can be imagined, beneath which, the whole ground was embroidered with a wild profusion of heather, cranberries, thyme, roses, myrtle, fox-glove, and the old original blue bells of Scotland. Who could attempt to describe such a scene! it is impossible! the gigantic outline, and the minute finishing,—the hills of a thousand years, and the blossoms of an hour! all that is majestic, and all that is lovely in nature, glowing beneath a flood of sunshine, and filling the heart with enraptured gratitude towards that Great

Being, who, in embellishing our world with beauty, has given us one earthly pleasure, in which there is no sinful excess, no disappointment, and almost a foretaste of that felicity which we look for in a still brighter and better world.

The road, gently undulating up and down the mountain side, might have been supposed merely a track formed by accident, but in other places it whirled round the hills like a corkscrew. We drove in a light open carriage, drawn by spirited young horses, which, in any other circumstances, would have engrossed my most anxious attention, but such was the elevating effect of this sublime scene, that I actually forgot to be frightened! The proud Lord Abercorn used to drive his thorough-bred horses over hill and dale, with no other reins than blue ribbons, the trappings he delighted in for himself, but having tried the experiment once too often, they ran off, when he leaped out and broke both his legs.

These roads through the tangled forests were made by a regiment formerly quartered in the old Castle of Braemar, a square tower

ornamenting the park of Invercauld, which once belonged to the Earls of Mar. Colonel Farquharson, seeing those soldiers falling into idle habits, like a second Marshal Wade, employed them in cutting and carving their way over the mountains, to so great an extent, that it would occupy many days now, to drive over all the highways and byeways they formed. One very rare species of tree was pointed out during our drive, "The gallows tree," on which the chief of the clan Farquharson, without thinking it necessary to consult any jury, exercised the privilege of suspending his retainers when disobedient. We abandoned the carriage at one impossible ascent, and scrambled up to admire the stream of the Garrawalt, falling in a loud, roaring cascade, which foamed and tumbled impetuously onwards. It was surmounted by a singularly elegant rustic bridge of rough stakes, so very light and insecure looking, that some visitors race across on tiptoe, expecting it to snap in two. The distant effect is charming.

In a tasteful and elegant moss-house, where we sat down to relieve our feelings by a can-

nonade of exclamations, while admiring the tormented river tumbling passionately about on its rocky bed, and then passing away, like the course of time, our attention was called off by observing that the whole roof and sides of this retreat had been grotesquely disfigured by a party of strangers from Aberdeen, who arrived there in the morning, and who had most ungraciously occupied their time in spoiling this romantic seat, by strongly fastening up with wires tickets exhibiting their own insignificant names, which had probably never appeared elsewhere, except on a shop-board.

To-day I got my first glimpse of Mar Lodge. Its best friends cannot call the house a beauty, being rather of the cotton-mill school, but as Cinderella's sisters observed of their ugly dresses, "to make up for that," all around is magnificent. The situation is not only superb for natural beauty, but also for affording every variety of sport. The newspapers resound each successive season with a list of killed and wounded at Mar Lodge. Among grouse, red deer, trout, salmon, and every living creature that has the misfortune to be called game, or

that it is any pleasure to kill, I suppose more deaths take place here annually, than in any other corner of the known world. Even the trees at Mar Lodge are slaughtered on a great scale! The better half of this venerable forest, once the ornament of Scotland, now lies prostrate in the dust. The saw-mill has done its work, and a few hundreds only remain to tell of the thousands that are no more.

As a colony of trouts in the Bruar once employed Burns to write a poetical complaint of wanting shade, the fish in the Dee should engage Campbell or Wilson, the only living poets of Scotland now, to assist them with a few verses. It is curious to observe how very much poetry has gone out; and we shall soon have nothing left but the embers, unless a little fresh fuel be put to the imaginations of the rising generation.

At the celebrated Lynn of Dee, this capricious, frolicsome stream is imprisoned within a contracted chasm of rock, and rushes out like splintered lightning, dashing with an impetuous violence, the thundering sound of which can be heard nearly a mile off. This need

scarcely be wondered at, when we see a broad river decanted through a narrow neck of solid stone, which so nearly meets over the top, that many fool-hardy people have leaped across. When driving towards the Lynn, I had observed, for about two miles, a ragged boy racing at full speed after the carriage; and at this moment he hastily descended towards the gorge, with an evident intention to exhibit before us, by taking this desperate leap. We most peremptorily summoned the little urchin back, at which he seemed considerably astonished, having been accustomed to receive a premium, rather than a reprimand, from tourists, for risking life and limb, to afford them diversion, but I would have given him double price to be stationary.

The first chief of the clan Farquharson was drowned here; and no one seeing the frightful pool, supposed by the country people to be bottomless, could fancy that a bone of his body remained unbroken. A poor man last month, who succeeded in springing over, missed his aim in attempting to return, and fell back into the foaming caldron! Now, what do you think

was the consequence? "Drowned of course!" No! by a sort of miracle, he was washed on to a rock perfectly unhurt, and lives to tell the tale himself.

Last, not least, Lord Byron very nearly died here in a manner worthy of his poetical taste. Some heather having tripped up his lame foot, he rolled helplessly down towards the precipice, but on the very brink of destruction, he was preserved by an attendant, who with difficulty saved his life—that life, a scene of so much fiery passion and intense agony, that he could scarcely afterwards rejoice at its having been prolonged. The world's loud plaudits could not drown the still small voice of an inward monitor, the witness for God in every mortal mind, reminding us that nothing on this earth can suffice for happiness; and the more intellect or sensibility frail man may be gifted with, the more empty, vain, and disappointing to his never-dying spirit will appear the vanishing pleasures of time. That the solemn and unspeakable importance of Christianity was at one period impressed on the mind of Lord Byron himself, may be hoped, from read-

ing the well-known lines inscribed on his own Bible:

Within this awful volume lies
The mystery of mysteries.
Happiest they of human race,
To whom their God has given grace,
To read, to fear, to hope, to pray,
To lift the latch, to force the way;
And better had they ne'er been born,
Than read to doubt—or read to scorn.

BLAIRGOWRIE.

Panting time toils after us in vain.
JOHNSON.

MY DEAR COUSIN.—Wherever travellers are going, if there be a particularly bad road, narrow and hilly, without parapets, bridges, or inns, you may feel certain that for some insuperable reason, they ought to prefer it, and accordingly, though we were recommended for comfort to proceed from Invercauld by the Blairgowrie road, I exceedingly wished to have gone up Glen Tilt, that we might see how dreary and wild the world would have been without inhabitants. There the long desolate ridges of Scarsochare 35000 feet high, the hill of Ben-na-muich-duidh has a name all but unpronounceable, and the forest of

Dalmore is noted as producing the finest natural pine trees in Europe, both in respect to their size, and the quality of the timber. Some of these trees measure from eighty to ninety feet in height, without a lateral branch, their diameter at the base being four feet and a half, but in spite of all these attractions, and fifty more besides, we submitted to advice, and plodded on towards Blairgowrie.

My miseries began with a ford across the Dee, which had been for several days before impassable, but the post-boy from Castleton of Braemar protested we might venture through, so I closed my eyes to avoid being frightened, and could not but remember at that moment, the not very consoling advice of a servant once in similar circumstances, to his master, "If it comes to the worst, Sir! hold down your head, and drown as fast as possible!"

There was once upon a time a public-spirited Lord Breadalbane, who erected thirty-two stone bridges, and if any one ever proposes a monument to his memory, my subscription, after this day's experience, shall be doubled. Bridges are certainly most convenient things, but those along

this road are so singularly narrow, that you might fancy the carriage wheels had been exactly measured, so as to graze the parapet on both sides. I must attend, however, to the grateful old proverb, "Let every one praise the bridge he goes over."

The Spittal of Glen Shea,—or rather the Hospital, as it used to be called, was our first stage, and after having driven through a wild looking desert, we here found a green expanse of excellent pasture, with something that called itself an inn, where a covey of Irish sportsmen annually assemble for the shooting season, and occupy the best rooms. It is surprising that gentlemen do not oftener pitch a tent upon the moors, which would be attended with the most romantic degree of discomfort. A party came to Scotland some years ago in this Arab fashion, and they brought moreover, a long narrow carriage, which could be metamorphosed occasionally into a boat. Thus they lived, according to the beau-ideal of Lord Byron, "My tent on shore, my galley on the sea."

Craighall showed itself for a few moments as we passed, a romantic old castle, which had once

the honour of being besieged by an Earl of Athol, who had married a daughter of the Rattray family, and intended, by killing all the male representatives of that house, to bring in his wife as the heiress, but he had no more success than he deserved, as the gentlemen proved "too many for him."

After pausing at the gay pretty town of Blairgowrie, we skirted along a complete chain of small lakes — or lakelets — not very illustrious for beauty. In the loch of Clunie, almost rising out of the water, stands an old castle, scarcely deserving a second glance, till you hear that it claims the honour to have been the birth-place of the Admirable Crichton, the wonder of his age, and of every subsequent age besides. I sometimes wish a scale could be invented for measuring the extent and depth of men's attainments—not as they seem to others, or are estimated by themselves, but according to the real weight of metal they carry. How grand and unexpected the sum total would appear in some cases, and how marvellously others, who fill up a large space in the public eye, would shrink to an atom; but such a genius as the Admirable

Crichton, would then, perhaps, be found to outweigh a whole college.

We drove at length through the lofty barriers of the King's Pass, which forms a grand entrance to Dunkeld, and arrived to dinner at Grant's very beautifully situated inn, near one end of the bridge, where the broad, deep, majestic Tay floats beneath the windows, clear as the glass through which we were gazing at it. I cannot but wonder that any traveller can ever tear himself away from this enchanting neighbourhood in less than a month, he must find so much to enjoy in strolling through the Duke's magnificent grounds, where the thing perhaps most to be admired of all, is the liberality with which they are thrown open, so that any tourist may feel here, as if he had suddenly succeeded to a large estate of his own, and were come to enjoy it.

The old Cathedral of Dunkeld, founded by Robert Bruce's protégé Bishop Sinclair, five hundred years ago, stands within the grounds, and is considered quite an architectural gem, being a curious omnium gather'em of various styles, forming a beautiful whole, though sketchers and

engravers have made sad havoc of its graceful Saxon and Norman arches. Most of the building is a mere shell, but we attended Divine service in the choir, which is yet in its *premier jeunesse*, on Sunday, and observed a handsome marble tablet, raised by the congregation in testimony of heartfelt and unanimous regret for the death of their pious and beloved clergyman Mr. Robb, drowned on board the Forfarshire steam-vessel, some months ago. In reading their expressions of deep lamentation, I could not but remember that this excellent man, when presented to the Church two years ago, encountered a universal veto, and the very doors were barricaded against him, by the identical persons now so entirely conciliated by his extraordinary zeal and ability. The patron has since presented this living to Mr. Mackenzie, who at once rendered himself acceptable to the whole parish, and it is confidently anticipated, that patronage will again be honoured in its protégé.

None of the parishioners attempted a veto on this occasion, with or without rendering a reason, and I hope it may be long before here or elsewhere, it shall become a sufficient cause for

rejecting a clergyman, to repeat those well-known lines, which used, at one time, to be reckoned rather ridiculous;

> I do not like thee, Dr. Fell,
> The reason why I cannot tell;
> But I do not like thee, Dr. Fell.

A very fine statue, representing the late Duke of Atholl, stands in the chancel of this cathedral, dressed in his robes of state, and extremely like, though merely copied from a small portrait of Landseer's, by an artist who never saw his Grace. Close beside it, we perceived a very handsome monument to the Marquis of Atholl, emblazoned with the quarterings of his many great connections, and few families ever had more to boast of, as they were once related to every crowned head in Europe, except the Grand Signior.

The climate here must be tolerably healthy, as there used to be at Dunkeld "an eighty-four club," no member being eligible till he attained that age. The late Duke used to say, that when young he made walks, and when old he made rides over the hills of Dunkeld, and both have now

been most effectually done, as the greatest pedestrian might fatigue himself here, in perambulating over the eighty miles of gravel walks and drives! It must require a Bank of England revenue to keep the place in such admirable order! I scarcely knew how to stop my peregrinations, for every turn of the way disclosed some new and incomparable beauty in the landscape. My feeling was like yours when interested in some very engrossing novel, every page rendering it more impossible to leave off. Mile after mile leads you on to more fascinating scenes, and every step discovers something not anticipated before. In one day the wearied guide led us, at a sort of race-horse pace, to Ossian's Hall, and we climbed successively to the summit of Craig Vinian and Craigybarns, yet I felt as if we had done nothing! Like Lord Chatham, we "trampled on impossibilities," and after walking sixteen miles up and down hill, I could have begun it all over again with pleasure, if the daylight only had been prolonged.

The grounds of Dunkeld are supposed to exhibit nearly the most beautiful specimen of landscape gardening in Europe, being as well

wooded and highly dressed as any in England, with the advantage of a broad rapid torrent like the Tay glittering among the forests, and the towering rocks and mountains adding grandeur and dignity to their singular beauty. A curious contrast may be remarked between the wild untameable magnificence of His Grace's more Highland residence at Blair, and the rich verdant fertility of Dunkeld. No expense was spared to embellish both; and as long as we have national vanity or national taste, all Scotland must gratefully remember, that those scenes were adorned, not for himself alone, but for the use and enjoyment of all who possessed eyes to admire them. Many a delightful hour has been spent in the groves and gardens of Dunkeld, by strangers of all classes, and of all nations, welcomed as if they had been the Duke's own relatives; and it is, indeed, a privilege to ramble at large among the secluded walks, the gigantic trees, the flowers, the arbours, the river's banks, and though last, not least, the hills covered to their summits with larch. That was well known to be the Duke's favourite tree, of which he planted twenty thou-

sand acres; and a Perthshire gentleman once remarked that though the county could not boast of an Arch-Duke, they had at any rate a Larch-Duke. When Wilkes came to this neighbourhood he protested that "the greatest vagary of Shakespeare's fancy was, to imagine a wood on Birnham Hill, where there never was a shrub." Certainly when the trees marched to Dunsinane they were very long of returning, as that mountain used to stand conspicuously bare among its wooded neighbours, like a great hay-stack in a garden, but the taste of the late Sir John Stewart of Murthly has enriched the scene by covering it with thriving plantations.

Last time we were here, A—— had the amusement of lionizing the present Duke of Orleans all over these grounds, after which we dined in his company with the Duke of Atholl, who made a speech to his royal guest, saying he had formerly raised five hundred men to make war on foreign enemies, but he was now employing an equal number in preparing a residence, where, if he did not live to practise hospitality himself, he trusted it would be done by those who came after him. He finished by proposing

the health and prosperity of Charles the Tenth, who had visited him at Blair during banishment from France, when the last words he said to the royal prince at taking leave were, "The kindest wish I can offer your Highness is, that I may never see you here again."

The employment afforded to his tenantry by the Duke of Atholl, became a source of so much opulence and comfort to all around him, that his death was felt as a family misfortune in every cottage on his wide domains. Five hundred men were employed till the hour of his decease, in building that palace of almost royal splendour, which will probably never now be finished. When the news arrived of his Grace's demise, a mournful dispersion of the work people instantly took place, and from that hour not a stroke has been heard among the deserted walls. A more strange and melancholy spectacle than it now presents, you can scarcely imagine. It is not a ruin! it is not a house! all seems fresh, new, and magnificent, yet in the surrounding desolation you feel conscious that some great calamity has occurred, and speak almost in whispers, while pointing to the splendid arches, windows, and doors, some of

which have been temporarily closed in for protection,—the half-chiselled stones, the bare red bricks, and the workmen's sheds surrounded by long grass and weeds, which grow all untrodden in the deep solitude and silence of this death-like scene.

The Duke, during his life, caused a small glass pavilion, like a lantern, to be erected near the new palace, in which he sat for hours every day, watching the growth of this noble pile; and having taken an English stranger once there, he laughed at his guest's long reach of imagination, who exclaimed, on beholding what looked like the foundations of a city, "This will be a noble ruin hereafter!" Little did his Grace or the admiring visitor then foresee how nearly that hour was at hand, when the rain and the wind would beat unheeded through these roofless untenanted apartments! A few short months would have completed this promising young palace, now so prematurely cut off. Two floors are nearly finished, as well as a gallery ninety-six feet long, besides an elegant private chapel, a spacious staircase, and several noble gothic windows.

which were to have been emblazoned with all the family shields and quarterings, carved in stone.

We were shown a miniature model, which cost L.500, of the whole edifice. Will any future Aladdin arise to accomplish the whole of this superb plan? If so, the power of stone and lime could no further go! We traced real genius in the bold variety, as well as in the graceful arrangement of the whole outline, and I must say, that the architect, Mr. Hopper, may go proudly down to posterity, carrying, as evidences of his taste, Penrhyn Castle in one hand, and Dunkeld Palace in the other! What profession in the world can compare to that of an architect for leaving permanent memorials behind! Sir Christopher Wren will need no monument as long as St. Paul's keeps its place; a marble tablet could add little to the celebrity of Inigo Jones; and who can ever forget Sir William Adams, while the barracks on Edinburgh Castle continue to be frightful.

It is a singular coincidence in this neighbourhood, that the twin-houses of Murthly and Dunkeld, which were in progress at the same

time, have both lost their founders, and remained ever since desolate and forlorn, though Murthly, with its towers crowned by glittering weather-cocks, and its temporary windows of painted wood, puts a much more cheerful face upon the matter than this extensive young ruin. We daily experience how wise and merciful an appointment it is, that no one can tell the year or the hour when his labours on earth shall for ever cease. All exertion would at once be paralyzed in such a case, and it requires energy of mind certainly in those who cannot reckon on a day, to begin what must occupy years to complete. "Man proposes and God disposes;" but we seem best to fulfil the intentions of Providence, when each individual continues active and diligent in his own vocation; and few have left greater memorials behind them than the late Duke of Atholl, whose forests, bridges, roads, and houses, while they ornamented his estate, spread industry and cheerfulness, where formerly there had been idleness and want. A great political economist has discovered that the prosperity of a country depends on every man exerting himself in the utmost degree to promote his

own interest, and while the Duke metamorphosed his own barren heaths into fruitful fields, he also changed an indolent peasantry into active, diligent, and happy labourers.

The attachment his Grace inspired was such, that the Highlanders would admit nothing that they thought to his prejudice, and when a stranger formerly asked one of the Duke of Atholl's foresters, if his master spoke Gaelic, the man, having recently returned from attending his Grace in a shooting excursion to the hill of Keichnacaapex, confidently replied, "Och, yes! the Duke speaks Gaelic fine! 'Twas only t'other day, when I was following him to the hills, his Grace turned round to me, and pointed with his finger, saying, '*Keichnacaapex, Donald!*' Och yes! he speaks Gaelic fine!"

The weather was as beautiful as the scenery, when we drove next morning towards the noble hills and castle of Blair-Athol, along miles of aged ash trees, oaks, and beeches, admiring and criticising a rapid succession of beautiful seats, and, to sum up all, threading through the very essence of Highland beauty, the pass of Killiecrankie, which every individual should see, who

has an eye in his head. The landscape is so enchanting, I could scarcely believe my eyes when I looked at it. How many of our countrymen once expired on this battle-field! and it might almost add a pang to death itself, when the eye gazed its last on scenes so bright and attractive. The rapid Garry roaring fiercely along its rocky bed, the cultivated fields, the wooded hills, the towering mountains, the gay little gardens, and the regiment of villas, are beautiful enough to make one dream for a moment, in spite of precept and experience, that there might be such a thing on earth as perfect happiness. In the most romantic part of this magnificent glen stands an old grey stone, raised in memory of "The bloody Claverhouse," as one party name him, and "The bold Dundee," as others insist he should be called, who died here, like Nelson, in the moment of victory, both conquering and conquered. It was an amusing scene which took place once, when a very aged Lady Elphinstone being introduced to Claverhouse, he politely remarked to her, "You must have seen many interesting things in your day, Madam?" To which she dryly answered, "'Deed no, Sir, ex-

cept when I was young, that we had one Knox deaving us wi' his *clavers*, and now we have a Clavers deaving us wi' his knocks !"

In the most romantic part of our drive, we met an elegant young lady, in a riding habit, hat, and green veil, mounted—no ! not on horseback, but on the top of the mail ! clinging to the coach-box, and gazing about, evidently in so fine a frenzy of delight that, could poetry possibly be inspired on the top of a coach, she had certainly found a rhyme,—at least if there be one in the world,—for Killiecrankie.

Among the fine plantations at Lude, an elegant new house is rapidly growing up *à là* Burn, which promises to be a very successful hit. The spacious windows command a superb view of the Garry for several miles, and of many rugged hills, with totally unspellable names. Here Mr. M'Inroy showed us the finest bowling-green I ever beheld, on which the lovers of bowls and other "gymnastic exercises" may amuse themselves. Games out of doors seem so wholesome and exhilirating, that the old grow young, and the young forget to grow old when practising them. Active habits prolong the enjoyment of boyish

spirits, long after a man of mere clubs and newspapers has subsided into his fire-side arm-chair, as a fixture for life, and every man who wishes well to himself, should cultivate a taste for whatever energetic amusement takes him off the hearth-rug. A clergyman in the Highlands lately objected so strongly to a cricket-ground being established in his parish, that the party of gentlemen who had begun the plan relinquished it; but if more innocent recreations were encouraged for all classes in Scotland, there would probably be fewer vices. It is amazing how creditably some persons get through their lives, without exertion of any kind, by rising late, dozing in the evening, and lounging all day, actually doing nothing; but the very essence of health and usefulness is found in the activity with which we devote a due portion of time to all things that can lawfully occupy it, not allowing relaxation to interfere with business, and least of all with religion, but making it consistent with the rest which our minds require for entering on the duties of both.

The late proprietor of Lude, General Robertson, who waged incessant legal warfare against

the late Duke of Atholl, was particularly annoyed at his Grace for claiming a right to hunt deer over all this estate. When Prince Leopold visited at the Castle of Blair, the Duke gave his vassal warning that he intended next day to exercise his privilege for the entertainment of his royal guest. Accordingly the deer were driven down, and everything promised a delightful day's sport, when, under pretence of doing all honour to the illustrious stranger, the General fired off a grand salute, which scattered the herd to the farthest limit of the forest.

The massive old Castle of Blair, the ancient fortalice of the Earldom of Atholl, has seen its best days, having been dismantled in 1745 by order of government, when the towers, pinnacles, and battlements were thrown down, and the elevation, which was seven stories high, became lowered to four, having been literally beheaded. Such was the thickness of these venerable walls, and the adhesiveness of the cement, that this barbarous act could only be perpetrated by successive explosions of gunpowder, but everything that makes a castle ornamental was perseveringly destroyed. The first sensation of tourists

on beholding this once pre-eminent building, must now be disappointment, but within, sufficient accommodation remains for the exercise of princely hospitality, and one of the apartments is embellished by a peculiarly handsome ornamented ceiling.

In " the '15," the only date remembered here except the " '45," the Duke of Atholl took the safe side, while his heir apparent, the Marquis of Tullibardine, zealously engaged himself with the opposite party, and joined the Earl of Mar. Having been attainted, he took refuge in France, and his politic father got an act of parliament to disinherit him, securing the estate and title to the next brother. The Marquis, now rendered desperate, became so eager in the cause, that four years afterwards he joined the Spanish invasion, when, being defeated at Glensheil, a high price was offered for his head, but he escaped. A third time, in '45, he joined in that attempt which ended so calamitously for him, but so happily for us protestants, long life to us! The Marquis made his escape from Culloden, but his horse failing, he surrendered in broken health and spirits, was imprisoned in the Tower

during the rest of his unlucky days, and died in less than a month. Who does not feel for so spirited and heroic a nobleman, who, from a mistaken sense of duty, forfeited his birthright as Duke of Atholl in Scotland, Sovereign Lord of Man, and Lord Strange in England. When the Castle of Blair became, during his life, the property of his junior brother the Duke, it was attacked by a still younger brother, Lord George Murray, but withstood the siege successfully. The fortifications were again proved invulnerable during the celebrated defence of them, made with a mere handful of men, by Sir Andrew Agnew; but it was at last finally, as we have seen, cashiered, broke, disarmed, and dismissed His Majesty's service.

The lucky Duke who had superseded his elder brother, acquired also, in a somewhat questionable way, the estate of his cousin Lord Nairn, who became ruined in the Stuart cause. A general understanding prevailed in those days, that when a forfeited estate was put up to auction, a friend ought to bid for the proprietor, and no rival should compete, that it might thus be restored literally for an old song. The Duke,

as head of the family, stood ostensibly forward, got the property knocked down to himself for a trifle, and having a good notion what a bargain means, either made no previous agreement with Lord Nairn, or did not find his cousin's money forthcoming, so, one way or other, Strathaird, near Perth, has remained stationary with the Dukes of Atholl ever since, and is likely to continue so.

Lord George Murray, whom I already mentioned, was forfeited for the Glenshiel affair, but pardoned, and afterwards perseveringly joined in the attempt of '45, when he became Prince Charles's Lieutenant-General. He was again attainted, but dying before his brother the Duke, his son's claim, as heir to the uncle, was ingeniously carried through the House of Lords, by means of the great Lord Mansfield; and having married his uncle's only daughter, "the Lady of Man and Baroness Strange," their son became the late Duke, of honourable memory. You will think I have torn a leaf out of Burke or Debrett this morning, but I do like to unravel and wind up the long line of an ancient family, especially when standing on the spot

which has been commemorated by their deeds from age to age. In case the Herald King at Arms should become jealous of my poaching on his manor, I shall now conclude, however, by referring you to the History of Scotland, where "for further particulars enquire within."

The editor of a fashionable magazine having said, when reviewing a lady's book lately, that he could not help falling asleep over it, was surprised to receive, some days afterwards, an elegant night-cap, with her best regards; and I might as well enclose one to you now, in case of accidents, as this last epistle is rather a heavy article, and may prove equally somniferous.

LOGIE RAIT.

I won't describe,—description is my forte;
But ev'ry fool describes in these bright days.
BYRON.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—This letter is begun inside the trunk of an ash tree at Logie Rait, measuring fifty-three feet in circumference, and here I should like to imprison for life all travellers who deny that Scotland can produce fine timber. Another of nearly equal magnitude stands on the opposite side of à broad river, and A—— is at this moment boating across to do homage at its shrine, while a distant glimpse quite satisfies my enthusiasm. I would not wish to be censorious on other countries, or very partial to my own, but the ash trees at Richmond might be placed in a flower-pot beside these!

The road from Blair in this direction, crossing at the Bridge of Pitlochry, is as up and down, as narrow, and as totally without parapets, as if we were travelling round the rim of several great mill-wheels, but we had a pair of worthy old Dobbins to draw us, and it became well worth the fright to see so lovely a country, though, if we had encountered cart or carriage, we should have been like the Highlanders meeting on a plank, one or the other must have gone over.

I am weary of admiring! something superlatively ugly would be almost a relief to the eye, but that is not to be had in Perthshire. Our post-boy was remarkably attentive in pointing his whip towards every object peculiarly deserving of notice, and at one place I was about to extemporize a very sentimental story for an exceedingly romantic and really elegant villa to which he directed our notice, when he spoiled all by mentioning that it had been bought as the rural retreat of a well-known hotel-keeper and coach-proprietor in Edinburgh, who left this neighbourhood when a boy, with only half-a-crown in his pocket, and who, by persevering

industry, gained enough to return here as a landed proprietor. He must greatly have missed the mail coaches, and did not long survive this experiment of rural felicity, the estate having descended, on his death, to a nephew.

Here the hedges of brilliant roses, the rocky precipices, and larch-covered hills, form a combination of indescribable beauty, varied by a foaming stream, which gives life to the whole. After passing Logie Rait, however, the country became more English, with rich undulating meadows, massy trees, corn fields, and a perfectly level road, though enclosed within a double range of green-hills and ditto wooded. We now passed another succession of small properties, too thickly studded to be extensive, in consequence of which it has been humorously remarked of one place, that the house is as broad as the estate. These residences are all chiefly inhabited by the royal clan of Stewart. When the present Duke of Orleans overheard some Highlanders once, in a steam-boat, discussing their different clans, he came good-humouredly forward and said, "I am of a greater clan than any of you! I am a Stuart!" The historian of

the Highland regiments, General Stewart, who had concentrated many branches of the family in his own person, used sometimes to be heard reflecting, in a truly Celtic tone, on the alarming diminution of the still numerous clan, saying, "There's very few Stewarts in the country now! There's Stewart of Garth! I'm Stewart of Garth! There's Stewart of Drummacharry! I'm Stewart of Drummacharry! There's Stewart of Kynnachan! I'm Stewart of Kynnachan!!"

The letters in this neighbourhood meet with so odd a reception when they arrive, that I do not intend to correspond with any of the inhabitants. We observed at Clochfoldie, and other places, that a hollow stone, conspicuously white-washed, is built into the park wall, containing a narrow slit, which serves as a letter-box, and the postman, running along the road, blows a blast on his horn and there deposits all the news and gossip of the day, in so quiet a receptacle that the whole packet may lie dormant for weeks still some one has leisure or curiosity to extricate it from this cold imprisonment. A similar plan is still adopted in the eastern parts of Yorkshire, where I saw last year something which resem-

bled a lamp-post, stationed on the road-side near every farm-house, carrying a wooden box on the top to receive the family despatches. Letters have lost all their rank and aristocracy now, by the abolition of franks, which also diminishes the importance of a seat in Parliament more than you or other sensible people would believe. The first thing a new M.P. did formerly, was to rehearse the pattern of his frank, how to distort his hand-writing so that the signature might be sufficiently unreadable, and whether to sign it in the north-east corner of his cover, or in the south-west, or to arrange it, as a certain M.P. did, in a semi-circle, like the bow of Cupid. We never used to be in company formerly with a Member of Parliament at dinner, without a general whisper being circulated round the room that an opportunity had at last occurred for securing a frank, while he had a daily opportunity of conferring favours on ten eager applicants, all volubly grateful on behalf of themselves and their country correspondents; but Members of Parliament need scarcely learn to write now unless they please.

The village of Weem has become a model of

cheerfulness and comfort under the active and benevolent care of Sir Neil Menzies, the proprietor. Instead of pursuing those sudden and violent schemes of improvement which, even when successful, occasion much intermediate distress, he has gradually, but with admirable effect, encouraged industry, and rebuilt by degrees, as the old tenants died or removed, every cottage on the estate, now almost unrivalled for its thriving well-ordered aspect, throughout a circuit of many miles. We were told that Sir Neil enables his tenantry to manufacture the whole produce of their farms in the neighbourhood, which insures them a certain market. For this purpose he has established two distilleries to consume the grain, and besides, to dispose of the wool, a most successful carpet manufactory, which might put Kidderminster out of countenance. I admired particularly one carpet made here, which displayed the colours of the Menzies' tartan, the pattern being branches of scarlet geranium on a white ground.

Not a drain or an enclosure seems wanting on this vast estate, where the hedges for miles around are like walls of leaves, and the cattle

appeared of such first-rate excellence, that I heard without surprise of their having gained the highest prizes in succession at the cattle shows of Stirling, Aberdeen, and Inverness.

The extreme attachment of the people here to their chief, is quite of the old school, and founded not merely on ancient associations, but on the daily and hourly experience of almost parental liberality and kindness in promoting the interests, and even the amusements of old and young, which are encouraged and patronized with unceasing attention to their happiness. Here, too, the sick are personally visited and assisted with such unsparing zeal, that none seem neglected in the wide circuit of this very extensive estate. I was particularly interested in seeing an old man of ninety-eight, a pensioner of the family, who walks daily from the village to the castle for work, and seems to think the world could scarcely get on without him, and least of all the chief's family; an agreeable delusion in which he is allowed to continue, though often there is great difficulty in inventing any employment suited to his very limited powers.

Near the venerable old house of Castle Men-

zies grow the finest sycamore trees in Scotland, overshadowing the beautiful park, which is barricadoed round with wooded hills and lofty mountains. Close behind the castle rises a singularly tall abrupt hill, almost a sheer precipice from top to bottom, and charmingly varied by trees, which have grappled hold of the rock, and manage, in a way of their own, to keep their stations, but you and I would be very sorry for ourselves, if we seemed as precariously situated as many of them are.

Near the door of Castle Menzies may be seen "The Chieftain's Stone," a large round block of granite, weighing more than I venture to guess, which the next heir, on succeeding to the supremacy of this clan, was always expected to carry in his arms up stairs to the dining-room, where his health was drank. It would be almost as easy to lift the house, or to run away with Schihallion at once; but if this achievement would have puzzled Hercules, there is a Bacchanalian cup in the Macleod family, almost equally defying ordinary power, formed to contain a bottle and a half of claret, which each successive chief is expected to drain at a draught. I think such

an achievement would have made Bacchus himself become mortal.

Castle Menzies is one of the few very large old houses in Perthshire,—"Long has it stood—still honour'd let it stand." The walls are ten feet thick, being proof against the assault of a foe, but always open to a friend, as the scenery around is not more truly Highland than the welcome within. Some centuries ago, the yet more ancient family residence stood on a different site, but the clan Menzies having peacefully assembled once in great numbers for a christening festivity, the ancestor of Stewart of Garth marched down with a host of retainers, besieged the old fortifications, barricadoed the doors, and set fire to the house, on which occasion a hundred Menzies's perished! Murder was committed in those days, both wholesale and retail, particularly by smoking, but in many Highland cottages now, the inhabitants appear so thoroughly seasoned with peat and tobacco, that it would be no easy matter to put them out of their usual atmosphere. Many old women we saw during our tour, who looked themselves like cigars ready to be lighted.

The new Castle, if it can be called new, was built in 1573, by the same architect who reared one at Taymouth, since razed to the ground, and it is said that these two edifices occupied eleven years in building. An elegant modern addition, uniform with the old edifice, is now in progress under the eye of Burn, who has all the quarries in Scotland at work. The windows here exhibit very handsome gabled ornaments on the exterior, and within we saw closets cut in the thickness of the wall, quite à lá Mrs. Radcliffe. After the family papers had narrowly escaped the fire and ravages consequent on Garth's attack, they were deposited here in a safe, like that of a bank, or more like a square stone well, entered by a trap-door from above, and inaccessible to fire, air, earth, or water—as secure, in short, as the manuscripts of Pompeii.

In the sitting-room here, the embrasures of the windows are so deep, that with a curtain let down, they form a comfortable and commodious apartment, so cheerful and bright sometimes, I could fancy myself living in the sun itself, though, perhaps, the cheerful society within adds a beam or two of vivacity to those venerable walls. It

is astonishing in so antique a Highland residence to hear nothing of a ghost; Mr. Burn should certainly be requested to supply the deficiency by building a haunted room,

> Where the curtains will shake of their own accord,
> And the raven croak at the window board.

Near one extremity of the park at Castle Menzies, the Tay and the Lyon meet in a scene of such marvellous beauty, that I sat down for half-an-hour to be in ecstacies, and to pity at my leisure all those who live elsewhere. Through a long range of richly cultivated meadows, these two broad rivers rush violently into each other's arms, and the mountains are all gathered round to witness the scene. One tall peak of Schihallion had caught a side glimpse of sunshine, which lighted up its usually frowning aspect, and the waving forests on every neighbouring hill were tipped with golden light.

We drove seven miles through the narrow mountainous vale of Glenlyon, an exquisite specimen of Highland beauty, being enlivened by the sparkling river, and hemmed in by hills glowing with heather. It might have made a schoolboy

tremble to see how the birches were waving over our heads; and here the mountains are so lofty, that villages lying at their base are three or four months every year without seeing the sun. The river Lyon, which now looked like a flood of light, once ran red with the blood of the slaughtered Macgregors, when, after a fierce conflict, the conquerors washed their swords in the stream.

Not a feature in this landscape could be altered without injury, and a painter might advantageously spend his whole life in taking views, every one of which would appear completely different. In some places you seem to have discovered an unknown world, never trod by human footstep, then comes an old ruin, hiding its decay in wreaths of ivy and roses, next appears a smiling village, afterwards a long colonnade of superb plane or ash trees, then a thriving farm, here and there a church; and the old burying-ground at Fortingal is particularly interesting. Go where you will, "we cannot leave the footsteps of the dead," and I often think how strange it is to consider, that for several thousand years, hundreds of men have died every day, and hundreds are as regularly born to succeed them.

It has been a long and ceaseless procession for centuries, from the cradle to the grave, in which year after year new actors appear and vanish; but our turn to walk for a time along the busy scenes of life has now come, and then, like the millions who have preceded us, we shall plunge into the gulf of eternity, making way for those in rapid succession who follow. None can stay his own progress—none can choose when he shall be summoned upon the stage of life, or torn away from its fleeting scenes; but the Christian need fear no evil, as there is prepared for us a holy garment to wear during our progress, the robe of our Saviour's righteousness, sheltered in which we may safely and peacefully pass from the vicissitudes of time, into the glorious mansions of eternity. His followers and disciples may confidently go forward to join the many who have preceded them into the regions of glory, and there wait for the many who shall yet be called to join the heavenly host in their songs of everlasting joy and praise.

In this church-yard many ancient graves were overshadowed once by the largest yew tree ever known, which could have furnished bows for her

Majesty's whole body-guard of archers. It measured fifty-six feet round, and, until lately, carriages attending a funeral used to drive through the hollow trunk. There only remains now one little monument of its existence, in the shape of a small stunted fragment, not larger than a tombstone. Seeing this forlorn leafless relic, one might be apt to forget that it ever was young and flourishing, as children who behold the aged survivors of a past generation, look upon them often with a sort of contemptuous pity, and fancy they are made only for decay and death. There are three distinct stages which we must expect to experience in the attachment of those around us. The fond and partial affection of our parents in childhood, is exchanged in after life for the companionship and confidence of cotemporaries, but when these early associates are swept into the grave, if we live to see that painful hour when the closest and dearest ties of an earthly existence are severed by the tomb, then comes the time when we must be satisfied with the compassionate sympathy of a subsequent generation. When memory, instead of hope, becomes our only link to the world, an aged Christian

must fervently long for that hour when "the weary springs of life stand still at last," and when he shall be born into a new and better world there to regain the long lost friends, forgotten perhaps by all but himself, whom once he loved and knew. In such a case, who would not envy the weary pilgrim, when closing his eyes on the sorrows and infirmities of a present life, in the believing hope that his sufferings are over, and the victory won for him by a once crucified and now glorified Redeemer?

> "Oh, mourn not for them, their grief is o'er;
> Oh, weep not for them, they weep no more;
> For deep is their sleep, tho' cold and hard
> Their pillow may be in the old kirk-yard."

Along this glen, we passed the scene of a tragical event, in which there certainly seems to have been almost an instance of second sight. A most promising and intelligent young man, Mr. Campbell, factor to Sir Neil Menzies, was most unfortunately killed here five years ago, by his horse taking fright, and leaping over the parapet of a bridge, when both the animal and his rider

were dashed to pieces. On examining his papers, it was found that, in the morning of that fatal day, he had risen particularly early, and made his will, leaving every article he possessed to different friends. Even his wardrobe and pocket-handkerchiefs were specified, and not a single thing omitted, except the clothes he rode out in.

We must not claim second-sight, however, for the well-known General Stewart of Garth, whose residence, Drummacharry, being in the glen, he gave a farewell-dinner here to all his neighbours, on the occasion of his departing to take a command in the West Indies, and made a speech, inviting the whole party to reassemble at the same table that day three years; but, alas! before as many months had elapsed, that brave and talented officer fell a victim to the climate. His estate has been sold to Sir Archibald Campbell of Burmese celebrity, but I did not hear whether he fulfilled his predecessor's promise, of a dinner on the day specified. It is curious that no hospitable *bon-vivant* ever thought of instituting an annual dinner, with ices, turkeys, and champaign, in commemoration of his own memory, to be con-

tinued as long as any one survived who had personally known him. It would be something new, and might ensure his not being forgotten under a certain number of years, which is by no means a very easy object for any one to accomplish in these busy stirring times.

TAYMOUTH.

He saw apartments where appear'd to rise
What seem'd as men, and fix'd on him their eyes—
Pictures that spoke; and there were mirrors tall,
Doubling each wonder by reflecting all.

CRABBE.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—It is not always true, as writing masters persist in telling their pupils, that "Familiarity breeds contempt." On the contrary, every day, as it increases my intimacy with the Highlands, increases also my respect and admiration for them, so that I wish to learn by heart every nook and cranny throughout their wide extent, and feel convinced that life is too short for studying thoroughly, and enjoying sufficiently, their inexhaustible beauties.

We this morning treated our eyes to a sight of Taymouth, anciently Balloch, one of the chief

glories of Scotland, belonging for many centuries past to the ancestors of Lord Breadalbane, the present proprietor, whose family motto has this peculiarity, that such of the Campbells as are branches of the same stem, all carry a sentence which replies to their leader. The Marquis says, "Follow me;" to which one family answers, "I follow;" another, "Thus far;" a third, "I bide my time;" a fourth, "Victory follows the brave;" and a fifth, "I follow what is right;" a most judicious limitation to their allegiance. The late Peer somewhat perplexed the ignorant Highlanders, who had been accustomed from time immemorial to call their noble landlords, "Breada-a-albane," by insisting on the more modern appellation of "My Lo-o-ord," to which they are now becoming somewhat accustomed, though it still seems to them a great diminution of dignity.

The Emperor of Russia once declared that if he were not Alexander he would be a British country gentleman; but I go far beyond him, being convinced that Taymouth Castle would be incomparably preferable to the Imperial palace at Petersburgh, and you will think the

same as soon as you have seen both, which, by the way, I have not yet done myself.

The rushing Tay devolves from its parent lake at the west end of the park, which is varied by fine specimens of forest trees in every variety, and situated between two ranges of mountains, wooded to their summits, and torn asunder to make way for the broad expanse of pleasure grounds between.

With a few architectural faults, this house is a noble baronial pile, which has few rivals in the Highlands, but the nearer anything approaches to being a *ne plus ultra*, the more inclined people are to exhibit that most universal of all talents, a taste for fault-finding, of which I must now give you a specimen. Those who are so fastidious that they cannot exist without perfection, should leave this world as soon as possible; but while the objections of critics are often frivolous and vexatious, I like to hear the opinions of judges, who keep all their eyes open for beauty, and only look askance at defects; accordingly, I agree with those who object to a wing of the old house having been allowed to

survive, which is obviously incongruous with the modern castle, and breaks the line in a plan decidedly meant to be formal. This excrescence, which has baffled the united taste of the present proprietor and of the modern architect, was retained by the late Marquis as his home while he reared this elegant castle, and he became so attached to it that the addition would at last have been thrown down by him rather than the original. The new edifice forms a large solid square, flanked by handsome round towers at each corner. One wing on the right contains an elegant private chapel, embellished with a highly ornamented tower, and the corresponding wing,—which does not, however, correspond at all,—is a long gothic edifice containing the stables and offices.

If any description could do half-quarter justice to this unsurpassable place, you would say my sketch must be "*plus belle que lá vérité.*" Only fancy its terrace winding by the river side, its three miles of beeches, its lime-trees,—forming a gothic arch of nearly a mile long,—the forest glades, the flowery meadows, the rocks, and wooded hills! If a fairy offered to add

whatever we might propose to embellish the scene, what could you ask for more? The gardens are delicious, and nothing enchanted me more than a fancy dairy, built some years ago, of transparent spar, like rough blocks of ice, projecting so as to catch every sun-beam, and to reflect back all the prismatic colours of the rainbow. It looks as if an ice-berg had been stranded here and excavated for the occasion, or as if the Empress Catherine had sent over a specimen of her celebrated frozen palace to astonish the Highlands.

Under a grove of trees, I suddenly observed a noble herd of red deer, and it would have driven any sportsman crazy with delight to see these graceful creatures all starting up at our approach. They stared for some time, then trotted away in a line, tossing their branching horns with inexpressible dignity, and after performing a sort of military movement round the park, they formed in a half circle, wheeled rapidly past us, and took up a commanding position on a high bank very near where we stood, appearing there to the utmost advantage.

At this moment I began to have a glimmer-

ing recollection that this was the very spot where, two years ago, one of these very animals attacked Mr. Fox Maule's carriage-horses, and killed one, besides severely wounding the other. This caused me some little panic on beholding the regiment of antlers bristling in formidable array so very near, and on turning a sharp corner we found ourselves close to one tall stately-looking hart. He seemed perfectly tame, and allowed me to pat him, becoming gradually so propitiated by our friendly attentions, that he turned to join the party, and actually walked at least a mile in our company, evidently much pleased with his new associates, and looking so intelligent that he seemed to understand all we said. The red-deer are very dangerous, however, in this half-tame state, and one transported lately to Ireland, became so furious that after killing one man and attacking a second, he had to be shot. During our progress, therefore, I wished it had been possible civilly to get rid of our new companion, as I did not particularly enjoy walking in this way, arm in arm with so formidable a stranger, but he behaved extremely well, and seemed really sorry to leave

us, when A—— slammed the gate in his face, on our quitting the park.

Several bisons from South America were likewise grazing near the house at Taymouth, so we were in a perfect zoological garden, without the advantage of cages, which are, on the whole, rather desirable under such circumstances. I was afterwards informed, that these far-travelled foreigners are, even in their own country, exceedingly fierce, but in the rich pastures of Perthshire the bisons become still more irritable. They did not, however, take the trouble of tossing us!

The Baron's hall, at Taymouth Castle, with its cathedral-like door, is a splendid room, the wainscoat of richly carved oak, the windows of painted glass, emblazoned with the family arms, and the oak floor so extremely slippery that only a skilful skaiter should venture across.

In the drawing-room hang two portraits, alleged to be Vandyke's best. That artist's great patron, with whom he frequently resided, was Rich, Earl of Holland, one of the handsomest men of the age; and ample justice has been done here to the chivalric appearance of

that nobleman, so admired at court that Charles the First became jealous, and caused him to be imprisoned within his own house. The Earl's politics, like the Vicar of Bray's, were most accommodating, but, nevertheless, he died on the scaffold at last, for making one final effort in behalf of his royal master. That melancholy end is what I always expect to hear of, when admiring any fine chevalier-looking portrait of a distinguished man in those turbulent days. The costume of this picture is too splendid for almost any court in the present time. What would Louis Philippe's mud-bespattered courtiers say to Lord Holland's white boots trimmed with point, a dress of white and gold, and a scarlet cloak flowing down behind, while his magnificent armour, which seems to have been that moment put off, is glittering beside him.

The other Vandyke represents Lord Holland's elder brother, the Earl of Warwick, High Admiral of England, and a steady supporter of Cromwell's. In those days he kept open house for the clergy, saying, "I make merry with them and at them." This picture is very animated, the dress beautiful, and the silken hose so ex-

ceedingly pink that they would put a rose to the blush, but in these days silk stockings were borrowed even by a crowned monarch, and few noblemen being rich enough to have any, the painter has shewn them due attention.

Here also we observed several pictures by Jameson, the Scottish Vandyke, whose prices would be an excellent example to modern artists, for we might all sit, if portraits of first-rate merit cost only L.1, 3s. 4d. per head! Most of the Taymouth ancestors are now in London, getting themselves refreshed, re-gilt, and re-varnished, but we saw the first Lord Breadalbane, one of the cleverest men in his day, who married the daughter of Lord Holland, and, when she died, he gained large estates in Caithness, by espousing a widow, heiress to the ancient Earls of Caithness. Having occasion to conquer his newly acquired territory, he caused a ship, laden with whisky, to be purposely stranded off the coast, and when the people assembled to plunder it, he surprised them in a state of intoxication, and defeated the revellers with great slaughter.

In the new addition to Taymouth Castle, some

of the sitting-rooms appear only to be accessible by passing through the chapel; and the ceiling of the library has already cost L.300. It is most elaborately decorated in the antique style, with deep cornices, and a profusion of curious devices; but in order fully to examine and appreciate all the ornaments, a visitor would require to prostrate himself for some hours on the floor.

About twelve miles beyond Cupar, in the rich valley of Strathmore, stands the beautiful castle of Glammis, a tall building nearly one hundred feet high, with a world of spires, towers, turrets, and battlements; but its greatest peculiarity is the shape, having four wings projecting like spokes of a wheel, towards different points of the compass. It has for ages past belonged to the Earls of Strathmore, who must have been, if painters did not flatter in former days, as they sometimes do now, a singularly handsome race. The most interesting event in this family was the tragical fate of the young, innocent, and beautiful Lady Glammis, publicly and ignominiously burned to death for witchcraft on the Castlehill of Edinburgh. She was sister to the Earl of Angus, whom James the Fifth, his step-son, hated,

and his royal detestation against the house of Douglas, led him to accuse this amiable lady of "spelling away his life." His Majesty certainly contrived to shorten hers! Lady Glammis' son, a mere child, was forfeited, imprisoned, and condemned to be executed, but after the king's death he was restored. His eldest son, the chancellor, was slain by accident, in consequence of a feud with the Earl of Crawford; and his second son was the gruff Master of Glammis, who kept the door against King James during the famous raid of Ruthven; and when the young monarch burst into tears, he dryly remarked, "Better that children weep than bearded men," a view of the subject which his Majesty never forgot.

In later times there were six brothers in this family, who, each in succession, became Earl of Strathmore, and the last died a very amiable death when endeavouring to pacify some angry combatants in a brawl.

As we are homeward-bound now, I expect soon to exchange writing for speaking, and narrative for dialogue, which will be a most welcome improvement in our intercourse, and I hope our

two minds will often strike a light between them. I have sometimes thought how curious it would be, if a volume were supernaturally to appear at the end of men's lives, containing all they have ever spoken. Some would be seen to have scarcely uttered so many words altogether as would fill a small duodecimo, while others have rattled out more in a day than most people in a year; but, as Pope says, the tongue is a race-horse, that runs the faster the less it carries. We shall both of course hit exactly the happy medium between taciturnity and volubility; meantime wishing you joy of having so voluminous a correspondent, I bid you once more, a very short adieu.

Lost in earth, in air, or main,
Kindred atoms meet again!

BLAIR-ATHOL.

Give ear unto my song,
And if you find it wondrous short,
It cannot hold you long.

GOLDSMITH.

MY DEAR COUSIN,—This is the only letter I have yet felt any regret in sitting down to write, being my P.P.C. It is always unpleasant to do anything for the last time; even when finally stepping out of an old hack-chaise, I could almost muster up some fine feelings for the occasion. Conceive then my emotion, on parting with this veteran pen, split up to the hilt, and on giving it a final dip into ink as thick as a pudding, but one great secret of writing is, to know the proper time for stopping, and I agree with a very sensible French writer who remarks, "*C'est le*

" *role d'un sot d'etre importun. L'homme sage,*
" *sçait disparoitre le moment qui precéde celui ou*
" *il seroit de trop.*"

A gay annual meeting takes place in Perthshire at this season, for the practice and exhibition of all those athletic games and exercises for which the Highlanders used formerly to be so pre-eminent, and as it is held this year, close to Blair-Athol, at the bridge of Tilt, we thought our best compensation for not seeing Lord Eglinton's Tilting would be, to join this rendezvous at the Tilt meeting, especially as we were invited to accompany a party with whom it would have been a pleasure to go anywhere, and accordingly we proceeded to what an English stranger called by mistake " the *kilt* meeting."

Here, as well as at the Ayrshire tournament, the spectators would all have required the Humane Society's apparatus to recover drowned persons, for the rain fell in such torrents, it really was a natural curiosity worth coming all the distance to see. Though wind and weather did not permit, however, crowds remained many hours on the ground, all in full stare, and certainly a more

curious exhibition can scarcely be fancied than those Olympic games of the North.

On a grassy plain, like a magnified bowling-green, surrounded by a ring of wild and wooded mountains, we saw a brilliant circle of carriages, filled with ladies—all young and beautiful, of course—wearing arches of feathers over their heads, and gardens of flowers underneath their bonnets. Within this wreath of beauty and fashion, was collected a multitude of tall, fine-looking Highlanders, showily dressed in the gay tartans of their various clans. Here kilts, philabegs, plaids, dirks, Highland bonnets, and eagles' feathers were all mingled in one dazzling medley, varied by the animated countenances of those who wore them, all glowing with health, excitement, and good humour. The scene was greatly enlivened by the warlike bagpipes, decorated with magnificent banners, and long streamers which floated like rainbows in the air; and without doubt the most dignified looking human being who steps upon the earth, is a Highland piper in full costume, his feathers waving like cedar trees in his bonnet, while he blows through

his pipe, till he almost blows his head off, and struts about, as if he were leading all his clansmen to victory. We have never been distinctly told what was "the tune the cow died of," but I am convinced it could only be a Highland pibroch.

The chieftains, noblemen, and gentlemen in general, wore the undress tartan livery of their clans, exactly similar to that of their tenants, servants, or dependents, and we were expected to distinguish the aristocracy from the democracy, not by any advantages of dress and ornament, but by a native superiority of air, manner, and appearance. In some cases this was very easily done, for we could trace a dignity of exterior in those accustomed to authority and distinction, carrying "pride in their port, and defiance in their eye," which announced at once a man of birth and rank, but, on the other hand, there were many illustrious individuals, who relied on our penetration rather too implicitly. Among so many fine soldier-like men, practised in fencing, dancing, and other manly exercises, it required something very nearly superhuman

to cause an instinctive recognition of any person's real rank and consequence. If the officers in a regiment were all equipped exactly like the men, and indiscriminately mingled together, it might puzzle even a Field-Marshal, or a Lord in Waiting to discriminate the difference; and even a Highland chief, in coarse tartan plaid, and blue bonnet, looks sometimes, to an ordinary eye, not very unlike a Highland drover.

I have heard of such a contradiction in terms as "an aristocratic democrat," which may do in politics perhaps, but can scarcely be hit off in dress; and it is such voluntary levelling of their own external distinctions in the higher classes, which produces Radicalism and discontent among the lower orders. If noblemen and landed proprietors, instead of "hiding behind the veil of insignificancy," would take the trouble—for a trouble it certainly must be—to appear on all public occasions in a degree of state suitable to their dignity, we should hear less about the feelings of equality and insubordination, which are now so rapidly increasing among those who, being unable to estimate moral and intellectual pre-

eminence, know nothing of great men but their outward aspect, and who observe little in that respect very obviously superior to themselves. You have often seen the sun, when shorn of his beams, look very like the moon, and I could fancy how convenient it would be to a peacock, if he could go about occasionally quite incog. without his tail, but then he must not be surprised if other birds think themselves as good as he. The old proverb is really mistaken in saying, that "pride feels no pain," because it is often put to a great deal of inconvenience by the external trappings of magnificence, which nevertheless it is unfair towards all ranks of society, entirely to lay aside.

A tall grand-looking Highlander in full costume was pointed out to me at the Tilt meeting, who held himself particularly erect, and walked with a free and graceful step. My companion whispered that he was the eldest son of Lord S——n, and I never guessed, of course, that there could be any mistake, till several minutes afterwards, when he appeared in the ring as a competitor, instead of a judge, and he turned out

to be an innkeeper, celebrated for his prowess and activity. It must be difficult for men making so astonishing a display of agility and power, which they probably occupy years in acquiring, to remember always the admonition of Holy Scripture, not to " glory in their strength."

Each performer successively carried the well-grown trunk of a larch tree, nearly twenty-feet long, quite erect in his hands, and after running a few steps, threw it violently forward with so strong an impetus, that the top struck the ground, and it wheeled completely over, describing a half-circle in the air. As one competitor after another attempted this Herculean feat, a pause of intense interest took place, but the greatest success did not elicit a *soupçon* of applause. If the audience had been composed of Madame Tassaud's wax-work figures, they could scarcely have remained more passive. Except a glance of surprise exchanged between those who stood nearest each other, no external symptom of approbation appeared ! It is so commonly the case in Scotland, that orators, musicians, and other public performers, become discouraged

and abashed by the solemn silence which follows their most brilliant efforts, that I mean to invent a machine, and take out a patent for it, which shall make a sound like the clapping of several hundred hands, whenever any single individual touches the spring, which will thus fill up the pauses of orators, while searching for an idea, and afford the encouragement necessary for carrying on every display of ability with proper spirit. The only speech I have heard of lately which excited sufficient enthusiasm, was that of a political candidate to a Radical mob, when he began by saying, " Gentlemen !" and not one of the audience having ever been thus addressed before, the burst of applause became so deafening, that not another word of his speech was audible.

Highland dancing displays incomparable execution, and requires a rapidity of movement which the eye can scarcely follow. One of the performances would have amused you much, on account of the extreme precision and neatness which it required, being quite in the hair-breadth style. Two walking sticks are laid on the ground

in a horizontal cross, within the four angles of which a dancer undertakes to perform with matchless rapidity a series of the most intricate steps, but the instant his foot accidentally touches one of the sticks, he is obliged to stop. Formerly two sharp swords supplied the place of those inoffensive poles, and they so effectually disabled a performer, after the slightest *faux pas*, from continuing to exhibit, that he might as well have executed his hornpipe among red-hot plough-shares. The dance gets quicker and quicker, the music more rapid, and the steps more intricate every instant, while the competitor passes with ceaseless activity over the prostrate sticks, springing so lightly across, that his feet seem only pointing at the ground, without ever resting on it. All that feet can do, these Highlanders did, and more than I ever saw any feet attempt before, but we all looked on in solemn silence, as if witnessing an execution.

Nothing ever looked more like insanity than the reels at last! Four stout Highlanders, in full dress, raised on a wet slippery wooden platform, and dancing in the open air, under a tor-

rent of rain, cracking their fingers to imitate castenets, shuffling, capering, cutting, whirling round, and uttering the sort of sudden yell, customary here, during a very animated dance, to encourage the piper. In tolerable weather this would have been all very enlivening, but I felt grieved for the beautiful tartans, which grew dim as we looked at them, and such joyous merriment, under a canopy of mist, rain, and east wind, seemed quite delirious.

The wives, sisters, and daughters of the performers were all anxiously looking on from beneath their cotton umbrellas with sensations of interest and excitement, such as the greatest gambler on a race-course might have envied, and my chief diversion arose from watching their eager countenances, while frequently, in a burst of uncontrollable excitement, they broke through the lines, and advanced within a few paces of the competitors. At one moment, when the rain poured down with peculiar vehemence, a crowd of dripping-wet clansmen, to save their gay tartans, put up a multitude of umbrellas, and cowered so near our carriage for shelter, that we

saw nothing of the dancing. My teasing dilemma being observed by one of the judges who happened to pass, he obligingly resolved to befriend me, and called out to the men in a tone of indignant astonishment, "Put down these umbrellas!! Who ever heard before of A HIGHLANDER WITH AN UMBRELLA!!!"

Down dropped every umbrella on the spot, and the poor men looked like convicted criminals, quite humbled at the very idea of being considered effeminate, while I really sympathized in their mortification, aware that, to a Celt, no accusation could have been more unwelcome.

As a learned philosopher once judiciously observed, "every thing that has a limit must come to an end;" and now having introduced you to the scenery, machinery, and decorations of the Highlands, while the whole *dramatis personæ* are collected on the stage in a state of perfect happiness, I must remember that, under such circumstances, it is customary for either a comedy or tragedy to conclude, after which the manager makes his final speech, filled with humility on account of his own deficiencies, and of gratitude

for favours received. According, therefore, to established prescription, I shall finish now, in the appropriate words of Shakespeare:

> Thus on your patience evermore attending,
> New joy wait on you! Here our play has ending.

Flourish of trumpets, drums, and bagpipes,—enter a procession of Highlanders. They form a group, and the curtain gradually drops, amidst thunders of applause. [*Exeunt.*

FINIS.

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